

THE  
S O R R O W S  
OF  
*W E R T H E R*:  
A  
GERMAN STORY.

—*Tædet cœli convexa tueri.*

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A NEW EDITION.



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M.DCC.LXXXVI.





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## P R E F A C E.

*THOSE* who expect a Novel will be disappointed in this work, which contains few characters and few events; and the design of which is to exhibit a picture of that disordered state of mind, too common in our own country. It is drawn by the masterly hand of Mr. Goethé \*, and is perhaps little more than the relation of a fact which happened within his knowledge. It went through several editions in German, and soon made its way into France. About two years since, the English translator met

\* Doctor of Civil Law, and author of some dramatic pieces which are much esteemed.

with

*with it ; and, being struck with the uncommon genius and originality of the thoughts, and the energy with which they are expressed, translated some of the letters from the French ; and led on by the beauty of the work, which encreased in proportion as it was attended to, the whole was insensibly finished ; and, as no translation from the German has hitherto appeared, it is now offered to the Public.*

*Among the number of pamphlets which this little work gave occasion to, there were not wanting some which censured it ; and Mr. Goethé has been called the apologist of Suicide, by those who, not distinguishing the Author from the Work, very absurdly ascribed to him the erroneous sentiments which he has given to his principal Character, — a method of criticism which would equally affect all the epic and tragic writers that ever existed.*

P R E F A C E. vii

WERTER *appears to have been strongly impressed with sentiments of religion; and it is not to be wondered at, that in his state of mind they should take an irregular form, and sometimes border upon extravagance. A few expressions which had this appearance, have been omitted by the French, and a few more by the English translator, as they might possibly give offence in a work of this nature.*

W E R T E R,



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# W E R T E R, &c.

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## L E T T E R I.

May 4.

**I** AM glad that I went away.—Could I leave you, my companion, my friend, that I might be more at ease? The heart of man is inexplicable: But you forgive me, I know you do. The connections I had formed, were they not sufficient to torment such a disposition as mine? Poor Eleonora! But am I to be blamed for the tenderness which took possession of her heart, whilst I was admiring the beauty of her sister? No! surely I am innocent: yet perhaps not entirely so; I might en-

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courage



courage her affection, and you have seen me pleased, amused, with the simple expression of her tenderness\*. Many causes might I find of reproach; but I promise you to desist, my dear friend. I will not always be looking back, and dwelling on the painful remembrance of the sufferings I have endured. I will enjoy the present and forget the past. You are certainly in the right; that fatal disposition which makes us recal past scenes and past sorrows, greatly adds to the number of the wretched.

Be so good to tell my mother that I am employed about her affairs, and that I shall soon write to give her an account of them. I have seen my aunt: instead of being ill-tempered and malevolent, as she was represented to me, she is the most cheerful, agreeable woman you ever saw, and has the best heart in the world. I explained to her my mother's wrongs, with

\* This first object of his affection is supposed to be dead, and has nothing to do with the following story:





regard to that part of her portion which has been kept back. She told me the motives for her own conduct, and the terms upon which she is very willing to give up the whole, and do more than we have asked. But I will say no more on the subject at present; only assure my mother, that every thing will go on well. I find on this occasion, as on many others, that neglect and misunderstandings create more trouble and uneasiness, than dishonesty and malice; and they are indeed much more frequent also.

I am very well pleased with my situation here. Solitude in this terrestrial paradise is a medicine to my mind. The delight of spring touches my heart, and gives fresh vigour to my soul. Every tree, every bush, is full of flowers, and a delicious perfume fills the air. The town itself is disagreeable; but the finest kind of country, and the greatest natural beauties, are in its environs. Upon one of the neighbouring hills, which form a chain,

and diversify our landscape, the late Marquis of M. made a garden: it is simple, and at first sight it is easy to perceive that it was not laid out by a gardener, but by a man of taste and feeling for his own enjoyment. I have already given some tears to the memory of its departed master, in an arbour that is now almost in ruins, which was his favourite spot, and is at present mine. I shall soon have entire possession of this garden; the gardener is in my interest, and he won't be a loser by it.

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## L E T T E R II.

May 10.

**M**<sup>Y</sup> mind is calm and serene, like the first fine mornings of spring. Solitude and tranquillity, in a country so suited to a disposition like mine, give me an enjoyment of life. Life itself is happiness, and the pleasure of mere existence so entirely absorbs me, that I neglect my talents;

talents; I don't draw, I can't make a stroke with the pencil, and yet I am a greater painter than ever. Thin undulating vapours are spread over the plain; thick tufted trees defend me from the meridian sun, which only checkers my shade with a few rays. Here, extended on the long grass near the fall of a brook, I admire the infinite variety of plants, and grow familiar with all the little insects that surround me, as they hum amongst the flowers, or creep in the grass. Then I feel the divine breath of that all-powerful Being which created us; whose eternal love supports and comforts us. A darkness spreads over my eyes; heaven and earth seem to dwell in my soul, and absorb all its powers, like the idea of a beloved mistress. Oh! that I could express, that I could describe, these great conceptions, with the same warmth, with the same energy, that they are impressed on my soul! but the sublimity of them astonishes and overpowers me.

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L E T.

## LETTER III.

May 12.

**F**AIRIES and Genii hover over my steps, or the most lively imagination influences my senses, and fills my heart. All Paradise is before me. Here is a fountain, to which I am attached by a sort of enchantment, like Melusina and her sisters. It is a spring of pure and clear water, which gushes from the rock, in a cave at the bottom of one of the hills; about twenty rough steps lead to it; the high trees which hang over it, the cool refreshing air of the place, every thing is agreeable, interesting, striking. I never fail to go to it every day, and generally pass an hour there. The young girls come from the town to fetch water from it—innocent and necessary employment, and formerly the occupation of kings daughters. The time of the patriarchs presents itself to my imagination. I see our ancestors

tors concluding treaties and making alliances by the side of fountains, propitious angels bearing witness. Whoever does not enter into these sensations, my dear friend, has never really enjoyed cool repose by the side of a spring, after a long summer's walk.

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## LETTER IV.

May 13.

**Y**OU offer me books; I will have nothing to do with them: for heaven's sake don't send me any. I don't wish to be again guided, heated, agitated. Alas! my heart is of itself but too much agitated already. I want strains that may lull me; and Homer furnishes them in abundance. Often have I strove to calm the blood that seemed boiling in my veins; often have I endeavoured to stop the keen and sudden passions of my heart

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—But



—But 'tis not to you that I need explain its feelings; you have often seen with concern my quick transitions from sorrow to immoderate joy, and from soft melancholy to violent and dangerous passions. My heart is like a sick child; and like a sick child I let it have its way:—But that between ourselves; for I know I should be blamed for it.

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## L E T T E R V.

May 15.

**I** AM already very much known and beloved by all the common people here, particularly the children. At first when I took notice of them and spoke to them, they answered me rather roughly, and thought I meant to insult them. However, I was not discouraged; but I found the truth of an observation I had often made before—that people of condition keep their inferiors at a great distance,



stance, as if they could lose their dignity by coming near them. It is only a school-boy's wantonness, or very poor pretence to wit, which could possibly make any body affect to descend to the same level with their inferiors, in order afterwards to treat them with contempt and ridicule. I know that we are not, nor cannot be all equal; but whoever keeps aloof from the people, in order to gain respect, I look upon as a coward, who hides himself lest he should not be able to stand before his adversary.

The last time I was at the fountain, I found a young woman on the steps, with her pail standing by her, waiting till somebody came who might help to put it on her head. "Shall I help you, my dear?" I said. "Oh! no! Sir," she answered, colouring. "Make no ceremony," said I, and helped her to lift the pail; she thanked me, and went up the steps.

L E T-

## LETTER VI.

May 17.

**I** HAVE made many acquaintance here; but I have as yet no society. I don't know what it is in me that can attract the inhabitants of this city; but they seek me, attach themselves to me, and then I am sorry that I can go no further with them. You ask me, what sort of people they are here? Just such, my dear friend, as are to be met with every where else. Men are much the same. The generality are forced to labour the greatest part of their time, merely to procure nourishment; and the small portion that remains is so irksome to them, that they are contriving every method in their power to get rid of it. Such is the lot of man!

However, there is a sort of people, very good, and very aimiable, with whom I often forget myself, and am dissipated enough to enjoy a great deal of that pleasure

sure which is natural to us. A chearful meal, a neat table, gaiety with frankness and openness of heart, a walk, a dance, and other little amusements in their company, have a good effect on my disposition: but then it is necessary that I should forget those other qualities in me which lie dormant, useless; and which I am even obliged carefully to conceal from them. Alas! this idea sinks my spirits! and yet, my dear friend, 'tis the fate of all that are like me, not to be understood.

Why have I no longer the friend of my youth? or why did I ever know her? I might say to myself, "Werter, it is a vain pursuit; thou art seeking what is not to be found!" But I had found it: I did find and know an exalted mind, which raised me beyond myself, and made me all that I am capable of being. All the powers of my soul were extended, and the deep sentiment which nature engraved on my heart was unfolded. What an intercourse! Our ideas, our expressions, were those

those of nature; and the purest affection warmed our hearts: and now—but she was before me in the career; she is gone, and has left me alone in the world. Her memory will be ever dear to my heart. Oh! I can never forget the strength of her mind, and the indulgence of her temper.

A few days since I met with Mr. V. an agreeable young man, with a very pleasing countenance. He is lately come from the university; and does not think himself a prodigy, though he may perhaps see his superiority to many that he meets with. Indeed he appears to have applied a good deal, and has acquired much knowledge. Having heard that I understood Greek, and could draw (two very extraordinary things in this country) he came immediately to see me, and displayed his whole stock of literature, from Batteux to Wood, and from De Piles to Winkelmann; assured me he had read all the first part of Sultzer's Theory, and was in possession of a  
manu-

manuscript of De Heyne's on the Study of the Antique. I forgave him all this.

I am become acquainted too with a very worthy man, who is steward to the prince. He is free and open in his manner, and loves society. I am told that nothing is more pleasing than to see him surrounded by his family. He has nine children; and the eldest daughter is much talked of and admired. He gave me an invitation to his house, and I intend going the first opportunity. He is about a league and a half from hence, at a hunting-lodge which the prince gave him leave to inhabit, after the loss of his wife: he loved her extremely; and could not bear to continue in the steward's house, where she died.

I have besides fallen in with some ridiculous people, or rather they have put themselves in my way. Every thing in them is insupportable: but worst of all are their professions of friendship. Adieu.

I think



I think this letter must please you; it is all historical.

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## L E T T E R VII.

May 22.

THAT life is but a dream, is the opinion of many; and it is also mine. When I see the narrow limits which confine the penetrating, active genius of man; when I see that all his powers are wasted to satisfy mere necessities, the only end of which is to prolong a miserable existence; that our seeming care, with regard to certain inquiries, is but a blind resignation; and that we only amuse ourselves with painting brilliant figures and smiling landscapes on the walls of our prison, whilst we see on all sides of us the boundary which confines us; when I consider these things, my dear friend, I am silent: I examine myself; and what do I find? Alas!

more



more vague desires, presages, and visions, than I find of conviction, truth, and reality: then all is chaos and confusion before my eyes; and dreaming like others, I let myself be carried away by the stream.

All wise institutors and learned teachers agree, that children are ignorant of the cause which excites their will. But that the great children, as well as the little ones, should wander upon this earth, without knowing whence they came, or whither they go; without any certain motives for their conduct, but guided, like them, by biscuits, sugar-plums, and rods; this is what nobody is willing to acknowledge, and yet nothing, I think, can be more evident.

I foresee what you will say in answer to this; and I will allow, that the happiest amongst us are those, who, like children, think not of the morrow, amuse themselves with playthings, dress and undress their dolls, watch with great respect before the cupboard where marna keeps the sweet-meats,

meats, and when they get any, eat them directly, and cry for more : These are certainly happy beings. Many also are to be envied,] who dignify their paltry employments, sometimes even their passions, with pompous titles ; and who represent themselves to mankind as beings of a superior order, whose occupation it is to promote their welfare and glory. But the man who in all humility acknowledges the vanity of all these things ; observes with what pleasure the wealthy citizen transforms his little garden into paradise ; with what patience the poor man bears his burthen ; and that all wish equally to behold the sun yet a little longer ; he too may be at peace ; he creates a world of his own ; and is happy also because he is a man : but however limited his sphere, he preserves in his bosom the idea of liberty, and feels that he has it in his power to quit his prison.

L E T-

## LETTER VIII.

May 26.

**Y**OU know my way of choosing a little favourite spot; how I make my arrangements, and settle myself in it. I have found one here which entirely suits me.

About a league from the town is a place called Walheim. It is very agreeably situated on the side of a hill; from one of the paths which lead out of the village, you have a view of the whole country; and there is a good old woman who sells wine, coffee, and tea, there: but better than all this are two lime-trees before the church, which spread their branches over a little green, surrounded by barns and cottages. I have seen few places more retired and peaceful. I send for a chair and table from the old woman's, and there I drink my coffee, and read Homer. It was by accident that I discovered this

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place,

place, one fine afternoon : all was perfect stillness; every body was in the fields, except a little boy about four years old, who was sitting on the ground, and holding between his knees a child of about six months; he pressed it to his bosom with his little arms, which made a sort of great chair for it, and notwithstanding the vivacity which sparkled in his black eyes, he sat perfectly still. Quite delighted with the scene, I sat down on a plough opposite, and had great pleasure in drawing this little picture of brotherly tenderness. I added a bit of the hedge, the barn-door, and some broken cart-wheels, without any order, just as they happened to lie; and in about an hour I found I had made a drawing of great expression, and very correct design, without having put in any thing of my own. This confirmed me in the resolution I had before made, only to copy Nature for the future. Nature is inexhaustible, and alone forms the greatest masters. What is alledged in favour of rules,

rules, is nearly the same as what is said in favour of the laws of society: An artist formed upon them, will never produce any thing absolutely bad or disgusting; as a man, who obeys the laws, and observes decorum, can never be a decided villain, or a very intolerable neighbour. But yet, say what you will of rules, they alter the true features, and the natural expression. You will tell me, that they only lop off superfluous branches, and prevent the extravagant. Let us compare talents to love, my dear friend. Let us suppose a man attached to a young woman, dedicating to her every hour of the day, wearing his health, lavishing his fortune, to convince her each moment that he is entirely devoted to her. Then comes a man of cold and correct understanding; a man who acts perhaps in a public character; and this very respectable person says to him, "My young friend, love is a natural passion, but it should be kept within due bounds: Make a proper division of your



## THE SORROWS

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time;

time; give some to your mistress, reserve the rest for business; calculate your income, and out of the superfluity make presents to her, but that only from time to time, on her birth-day, or such-like occasions." If the young man takes this advice, he may be a very useful member of society, extremely serviceable to his prince; but as to his love it is annihilated; and if he is an artist, his genius is fled. Oh! my friend, the torrent of genius would not be so confined in its course; its impetuous waves would rise and astonish us, but that cold and narrow-minded men have taken possession of the two shores; they have built houses and planted gardens on its banks; they tremble for their little habitations, and dig trenches, and raise dams, to prevent the danger which threatens them.

## LETTER IX.

May 27.

**I** FELL into declamation and similies, I find; and my enthusiasm made me forget to finish my narrative. Quite lost in my ideas of painting, which I unfolded to you at large in my last letter, I sat for two hours upon the plough, and towards evening a young woman with a basket on her arm came running to the children, who had not moved in all that time. "You are a very good boy, Philip," she called out. I got up and went towards her, and asked if she was the mother of those pretty children: she answered, that she was, gave the eldest a cake, took the little one in her arms, and kissed it with a mother's tenderness. "I left the young child with Philip," said she, "while I went to the town with his brother to buy some white bread, some sugar, and an earthen pot to make broth for Jenny to-night:

night: the boys broke our earthen pot yesterday, as they were quarrelling for the meat." I enquired where her other son was; and whilst she was telling me that he was driving home two geese, he came skipping up to us, and gave Philip a little ozier twig. I continued talking with the mother, and found she was the school-master's daughter, and that her husband was gone to Holland upon the death of an uncle he had there. "My husband found he should be cheated of the inheritance," said she; "for he wrote and received no answer to his letters, and so he went himself. I have not heard of him since he set out. God grant that no harm may have happened to him!" I left this good woman with regret, gave her a creutzer to buy white bread for little Jenny, when she went next to the town, and a creutzer apiece to the boys, and so we parted.

Yes, my dear friend, when I am no longer master of myself, nothing is more calculated to appease the tumult of my senses,

senses, than the sight of such a tranquil being. She moves with a happy thoughtlessness in the confined circle of her existence; day after day passes without disquietude; and the falling leaves raise no idea, but that of approaching winter.

Since that first evening I have gone very often to the same place: the children are become familiar with me; they have a bit of sugar when I drink coffee, and at night they partake of my whey and bread and butter. On Sunday they regularly receive their creutzer; for if I am not there after evening service, the old woman has orders to make the distribution.

They are quite at their ease with me; tell me all they hear, and their simplicity pleases me much. Their mother used perpetually to be calling out, to tell them they would be troublesome to the gentleman; and it is with great difficulty I have at length prevailed upon her to let them alone.



## LETTER X.

June 16.

**W**HY don't I write to you?—Do you pretend to penetration, and ask such a question? You should have guessed that I was well, but that—in a word, I had found a person that is still nearer to my heart—that I had found—I know not what I have found.

Regularly to give you an account how I learnt to distinguish the most amiable of women, would be difficult. I am contented, happy; and consequently a bad historian.

I must not call her an angel; that, you will tell me, every body says of the woman he loves: and yet I cannot describe to you how perfect she is, nor why she is so perfect; she has captivated all my senses.

So much simplicity, with such an understanding; so mild, and yet so animated;

ed; a mind so placid, and a life so active. But all these are only the common-place phrases of abstract ideas, and don't express a single character or feature. Some other time—but it must be now or never. For, between ourselves, I have, since I began my letter, been several times going to throw down my pen and fly to her. I made a vow not to go thither this morning; and I run every moment to the window to see if the sun is still high.

I was not able to hold out; I went there: I am now returned; and whilst I am eating my bread and butter, will write to you, my dear friend. Nothing can be more touching than to see her in the midst of her little family. But if I go on in this manner, you will know no more at the end of my letter, than you do at the beginning. Be all attention then: for I shall endeavour to give some method and order to my relation, and enter into a great many details.

I wrote you word some time ago, that  
I had

I had made an acquaintance with Mr. J. the prince's steward; and that he had invited me to go and see him in his retirement, or rather in his little kingdom. I neglected going, however; and perhaps should never have gone, if chance had not discovered to me the hidden treasure which it contained.

Some of our young men proposed a little dance in the country, in which I very readily joined. I chose a good pretty girl for my partner, and rather agreeable too, but nothing very striking; and it was agreed that I should take a coach, and with my partner and her aunt, should call upon Charlotte, and carry her to the ball. "You will see a very charming girl," said the young lady, when we came into the avenue which leads to the hunting-lodge. "And take care you don't fall in love with her," added her aunt. "Why?" said I. "Because she is already engaged to a very worthy man," she replied, "who is now gone to settle his affairs

fairs upon the death of his father, and solicit a very lucrative employment." This intelligence appeared a matter of great indifference to me. When we arrived at the gate, the sun was sunk near the tops of the mountains, the air was heavy, and low black clouds seemed to be gathering in the horizon. The women began to be apprehensive, and I foresaw myself a great probability of our party being interrupted; but in order to give them comfort, I put on a very sagacious look, and assured them the weather would be fine.

I got out of the coach. A maid came down, and desired us to wait one minute for her mistress. I crossed the court, went up stairs, and as I entered the apartment I saw six children, the eldest of which was but eleven years old, all jumping round a young woman, very elegantly shaped, and dressed in a plain white gown with pink ribands. She had a brown loaf in her hand, and was cutting slices of bread and butter, which she distributed in a graceful

ful and affectionate manner to the children, according to their age and appetite. Each held up its little hands all the time the slice was cutting, thanked Charlotte when he received it, and then ran to the door to see the company, and look at the coach which was come to fetch her. "I beg pardon," she said, "for having given you the trouble to come up, and am sorry to make the ladies wait; but dressing, and some family business, made me forget to give my children their little meal, and they don't like to receive it from any body else." I muttered something, I don't know what—my whole soul was taken up with her air, her voice, her manner; and before I could recover myself, she ran into her room for her gloves and fan. Whilst she was gone, the little ones eyed me askance. I went up to the youngest, who has a most pleasing countenance: he drew back, and Charlotte, just then coming in, said, "Lewis, shake hands with your cousin." The little fellow held out his hand  
very



very readily, and I gave him a kiss. "My cousin," said I to the amiable Charlotte, as I handed her down, "do you think I deserve the happiness of being related to you?" She archly replied, "Oh! I have such a number of cousins, I should be sorry you were the most undeserving of the whole set." When Charlotte took leave of them, she desired Sophy, who was the eldest of those left at home, to take great care of the children, and to go to her papa when he returned from walking. She told the little ones to mind their sister Sophy as much as if it was herself; and some promised faithfully that they would: but a little fair girl, of six years old, looked rather discontented, and said, "but she an't Charlotte though for all that, and, Charlotte, we love you best." During this time the two eldest boys had got up behind the coach, and at my request she gave them leave to go to the end of the wood, upon condition that they would sit very still, and hold fast.

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We had but just seated ourselves in the carriage, talked about the new fashions and the little hats, and the company we were to meet at the ball, when Charlotte stopped the coach, and made her brothers get down. They would kiss her hand again before they went: the eldest shewed all the tender attention of a boy of fifteen, and the youngest a great deal of warmth and affection. She desired them again to give her love to the children; and we drove on.

The old lady asked her if she had read the book she last sent to her. "I cannot say I have," said Charlotte, "and I will return it you. I confess I was not pleased with that, any more than with the first which you sent me." Imagine my surprize, when, having asked the title, she told me it was —. Penetration and judgment appeared in every thing she said; each expression seemed to light up her features with new charms and new rays of genius, which  
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were unfolded by degrees as she found herself understood.

“ When I was very young,” she added, “ I loved romances better than any thing in the world. Nothing could equal my delight, when I got into a corner on a holiday, and entered with my whole heart and soul into all the joy or sorrow of a Miss Jenny. I confess that sort of reading has still some charms for me ; but as I don’t read much, the books I do read should be suited to my taste. I prefer the authors who don’t carry me to scenes too far removed from my own situation in life, but where I may suppose myself and those that are about me ; and whose stories are interesting, touching, like the life I lead in the bosom of my family ; which, without being absolutely paradise, is a continual source of satisfaction and delight.” I endeavoured to conceal the emotion which these last words occasioned ; and it did not last long ; for, after she had given her opinion of the Vicar of Wakefield,

field, &c. &c. with equal justness and discernment, I could hold no longer; and I began with great eagerness to tell her what were my own thoughts on the subjects. After some time, when Charlotte at length addressed herself to the other two ladies, I just perceived that they were still in the coach. The old lady looked at me several times with an air of raillery, which however I did not at all mind.

We then talked of dancing. "If it is a fault to love dancing," said she, "I will freely own that I am extremely guilty; no amusement is more agreeable to me. If any thing disturbs me, I go to my harpsicord, play some of the lively airs I have danced to, and all is forgotten." You know me, and will figure to yourself my countenance whilst she was speaking—My looks stedfastly fixed upon her fine black eyes; my very soul attached to her's, and seizing her ideas so strongly, that I hardly heard the words which expressed them. At length I got out of the  
coach

coach like one that dreams ; and I found myself in the assembly-room, without knowing how I came there.

They began with minuets. I took out one lady after another, and exactly those who were the most disagreeable could not bring themselves to leave off. Charlotte and her partner began an English country dance. Imagine my delight when they came to do the figure with us. You should see Charlotte: she seems to dance with all her heart and soul, and as if she was born for nothing else ; her figure is all elegance, lightness, and grace. I asked her to dance the second country dance with me ; she was engaged, but promised herself to me for the third ; telling me at the same time, with the most agreeable freedom, that she was very fond of allemandes. “ It is the custom here,” said she, “ for every couple to dance the allemandes together ; but my partner will be delighted if I save him the trouble, for he does the walse very ill ; I observe the lady

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you



you dance with is in the same situation. I am sure by your English country dances, that you must do the walse very well yourself; so that, if it is agreeable to you to dance the allemandes with me, do you propose it to my partner; I will propose it to your's." We went to settle this affair; and it was agreed that during the allemandes, Charlotte's partner should attend upon mine.

We began; and at first amused ourselves with making every possible turn with our arms. How graceful and animated all her motions! When the walse commenced, all the couples, which were whirling round, at first jostled against each other. We very judiciously kept aloof till the awkward and clumsy had withdrawn; when we joined in there were but two couples left. I never in my life was so active; I was more than mortal. To hold in my arms the most lovely of women, to fly with her like the wind, and lose sight of every other object!—But I  
own

own to you, I then determined, that the woman I loved, and to whom I had pretensions, should never do the walse with any other man.—You will understand this.

We took a few turns in the room to recover our breath; and then Charlotte sat down, and I brought her a few slices of lemon, all indeed that were left, which I stole from those who were making the negus: she eat some with sugar, and seemed to be refreshed by them; but I was obliged in politeness to offer them to the lady who sat next Charlotte, and she very injudiciously took some.

We were the second couple in the third country dance. As we were going down (and heaven knows with what extacy I looked at her arms, and her eyes which bore the impression of a natural and lively pleasure) a lady of a certain age, whose agreeable countenance had struck me at first sight, looked at Charlotte, and smiled; then held up her finger in a threatening attitude,

titude, and in a very significant tone of voice said, "Albert! Albert!"

"Who is this Albert," said I to Charlotte, "if it is not impertinent?" She was going to answer, when we were obliged to separate for hands six round at bottom; and in crossing over I thought I perceived that she looked pensive. "Why should I conceal it from you?" said she, when she gave me her hand to lead out of sides; "Albert is a worthy man to whom I am engaged." I had been told this before by the ladies in the coach, but I had not then seen Charlotte; I did not know her value. I seemed to hear it for the first time. I was distressed, confused, wrong in the figure, and put every body out; and Charlotte, by pushing one and pulling another, with great difficulty set us right again.

Whilst we were dancing, the lightning, which had for some time been seen in the horizon, and which I had declared to be only summer lightning, and proceeding  
entirely

entirely from heat, became much more violent, and the thunder was heard thro' all the noise of the fiddles. Three ladies run out of the set; their partners followed; the confusion became general, and the music stopped. When any distress or terror comes upon us in a scene of amusement, it has a stronger effect on our minds, either because the contrast makes us feel it more keenly; or rather, perhaps, because our senses being open to impressions of all kinds, the shock is more forcibly and quickly perceived. This circumstance may account in some measure for the extraordinary contortions and shrieks of the ladies. One of the most courageous sat down with her back to the window and stopped her ears; another knelt down before her, and hid her face in her lap; a third shoved herself between them, and embraced her little sister, shedding at the same time a torrent of tears: some insisted upon going home; others, still more distressed, did not attend to their indis-

creet partners, who were stealing from their lips those sighs that were addressed to heaven. Some of the gentlemen went down stairs to drink a bottle quietly; and the rest of the company very willingly followed the mistress of the house, who had the good sense to conduct us to a room darkened by close window-shutters. As soon as we came into it, Charlotte drew the chairs round, made us sit down in a ring, and was eager to begin some little play.

More than one of our belles drew up and looked prim, in hopes of some agreeable consequences from the forfeits, "Let us play at counting," said Charlotte. "Observe, I am to go from right to left; you are to count one after the other as you sit, and count fast: whoever stops or mistakes is to have a box on the ear, and so on till we have counted to a thousand." It was pleasant to see her go round with her hand up. "One," says the first, "two," the second, "three," the third, and



and so on till Charlotte went faster and faster. One then mistook; instantly a box on the ear: the next laughed instead of saying the following number—another box on the ear; and still faster and faster. I had two for my share; I fancied they were harder than the rest, and was much delighted. A general confusion and laughter put an end to the play, long before we got to a thousand. The storm ceased; the company formed into little parties; Charlotte returned to the assembly-room, and I followed her. As we were going, she said, “The blows I inflicted made them forget their apprehensions; I myself was as much afraid as any body, but by affecting courage to keep up the spirits of the company, I really lost my fears.” We went to the window, and still heard the thunder at a distance; a soft rain watered the fields, and filled the air with the most delightful and refreshing smells. Leaning upon her arm, Charlotte fixed her eyes on the country before us, then raised them

to heaven, and then turned them upon me; they were wet: she put her hand upon mine and said, “\* Klopstock!” I was oppressed with the sensations I then felt; I sunk under the weight of them; I bent down upon her hand, and wetted it with my tears; as I raised myself, I looked stedfastly in her face. Divine Klopstock! why didst thou not see thy apotheosis in those eyes? And thy name, so often profaned, why is it ever pronounced by any voice but Charlotte’s?

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## LETTER XII.

June 19.

**I** Forget where I broke off my narration; I recollect nothing about it; all I know is, that it was two in the morning when I went to bed, and if I could have

\* A celebrated German poet, author of the Messiah.  
talked

talked to you instead of writing to you, I should certainly have kept you till daylight.

I believe I did not tell you what passed in our return from the ball, and to-day I have not time neither. There was a beautiful sun-rising; the whole country was refreshed, and the rain fell drop by drop from the trees in the forest.

Our companions were asleep: Charlotte asked me if I did not wish to sleep too? and desired I would not make any ceremony on her account. Looking stedfastly at her, I answered, "As long as those eyes continue open, I cannot close mine." We both remained awake till we came to her door: the maid opened it softly, and answered to Charlotte's enquiries, that every body was well, and still in bed. I left her, promising to see her again in the course of the day. I kept my word; and since that time, sun, moon, stars, may rise and set as they will; I know not whether it is day, or whether

it is night; the whole world is now nothing to me.

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### LETTER XIII.

**M**Y days are as happy as those which are reserved for the Elect; and whatever may be my fate hereafter, I will never say that I have not tasted happiness, and the purest happiness of life. You know Walheim; I am now entirely settled there: there I am but half a league from Charlotte; there I enjoy myself, and all the pleasure that a mortal is capable of. When I chose Walheim for the end of my walks, I little thought that all heaven was so near it. How many times, in my long rambles, have I seen this hunting-lodge, which now contains the object of all my vows! sometimes from the top of the hill, sometimes from the meadow on the opposite side of the river.

I have

I have often reflected on the desire men have to extend themselves, and to make new discoveries; and upon that secret impulse, which afterwards inclines them to return to their circle, to conform to the laws of custom, and to embarrass themselves no longer with what passes either to the right or to the left.

When I first came hither, and from the top of the hill contemplated the beauties of this vale, you cannot imagine how I was attracted by every thing I saw round me. The little wood opposite, how delightful to sit under its shade! how fine the view from that point of rock! How agreeably might one wander in those close valleys, and amongst those broken hills! I went and came without having found what I wished. Distance, my dear friend, is like futurity; a darkness is placed before us, and the perceptions of our mind are as obscure as distant objects are to our sight. We ardently wish for a warm and noble energy which might take possession  
of



of our souls; we would sacrifice our whole being to be filled with such a sentiment.

So the most determined traveller returns at length to his country, and finds in his own cottage, in the arms of his wife, in the society of his children, and in the labour necessary to maintain them, all the happiness which he sought in vain in the vast deserts of the world.

When I go to Walheim at sun-rise, gather my own pease, and sit in a corner to shell them, and read Homer; when I go into the little kitchen and make a soup of them, I figure to myself the illustrious lovers of Penelope killing and dressing their own meat. All descriptions of the patriarchal life give me the most calm and agreeable ideas; and now, thank Heaven, I can compare to it the life I lead myself. Happy it is for me that my heart is capable of feeling the same simple and innocent pleasure, as the peasant who sees on his table the cabbage he has raised with  
his

his own hand ; and who not only enjoys his meal, but remembers also, with delight, the fine morning in which he planted it, the soft evenings in which he watered it, and the pleasure he had in seeing it grow and flourish.

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## L E T T E R   X I V .

**T**HE day before yesterday the physician came from the town to make a visit to the steward's. He found me upon the floor, playing with Charlotte's children ; we were tickling one another, and romping, and making a great noise. The doctor is very formal and very solemn ; adjusts the plaits of his ruffles whilst he is discoursing with you, and draws his chitterling up to his chin. He thought this conduct of mine very much beneath the dignity of man : I perceived it by his countenance ;

countenance ; but I nevertheless continued to rebuild the houses of cards which the children had blown down. He told every body, when he went back, that the steward's children were spoilt enough before, but that now Werter entirely ruined them.

Nothing touches me more than children, my dear friend, when I consider them, and observe in the little beings the seeds of all those virtues and qualities which will one day be so necessary to them ; when I see in the obstinate, all the future firmness and constancy of a great and noble character ; in the capricious, that levity and gaiety of temper which will make them lightly pass over the dangers and sorrows of life ; and when I see them all openness and simplicity, then I call to mind the divine words of our teacher, " If you do not become like one of these—" And these children who are our equals, and whom we ought to look upon as our models, we treat them like subjects ;  
they

they are to have no will of their own.— Have we then none ourselves? and whence comes this exclusive right? Is it because we are older and more experienced? Great God! from the height of thy glory thou beholdest great children and little children (there are no other) and thou hast long since declared to which thou givest the preference! But it has also been long since declared, that they believe in him, and do not hear him; and their children are after their own image, &c.

Adieu, my dear friend: I will not bewilder myself upon this subject any longer.

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## LETTER XV.

July 1.

Charlotte will spend some time in the town: she is with a very deserving woman, who has been given over by her

4 physicians,

physicians, and who wished to have Charlotte with her in her last moments. What consolation she is capable of giving to the sick, I have myself experienced, for my heart is much diseased. I went with her last week to see the vicar of S—; a small village in the mountains, about a league from hence. We got there about four o'clock; Charlotte's little sister went with us. When we came into the court, which is shaded by two fine walnut-trees, the good old man was sitting upon his bench. At sight of Charlotte, he forgot his old age and his oaken stick, and ventured to walk towards her. She ran to him, and made him sit down again, sat down by him, presented a thousand compliments to him from her father, and played with the youngest of his children, the amusement of his old age, though it was rather dirty and disagreeable. I wish you could have seen her attention to this good old man; I wish you could have heard her raising her voice because he is a little deaf, and telling him



him of young and healthy people who had died when it least could have been expected; commending the virtues of the Carlestad waters, and approving his intention of going thither the next summer; and assuring him she thought he looked better than he did the last time she saw him. During this time I paid my compliments and talked to his wife. The old man seemed quite in spirits; and as I could not help admiring the beauty of his walnut-trees, which formed such an agreeable shade over our heads, he began to give us the history of them: "As to the oldest," said he, "we don't know who planted it; some say one clergyman, and some say another; as to the youngest, it is exactly the age of my wife; it will be fifty years old next October; her father planted it in the morning, and towards evening she came into the world. My wife's father was my predecessor here, and I cannot express to you how fond he was of this tree; it is certainly not less dear to me. Upon a log

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of

of wood, under this same tree, my wife was sitting and knitting when I came into this court the first time, five and twenty years ago." Charlotte enquired after his daughter : he said she was gone with Mr. Smith into the meadows to see the hay-making. He then resumed his history, and told us how he got into the good graces of his predecessor, and of his daughter; how he became first his curate and then his successor; and he had scarcely finished his story, when his daughter returned with Mr. S. and affectionately saluted Charlotte. She has a clear brown complexion, is well made, lively, and a sensible worthy man might pass his time very happily with her in the country. Her lover, for such Mr. Smith immediately appeared to be, has an agreeable person, but was very reserved, and would not join in the conversation, notwithstanding all the endeavours of Charlotte for that purpose. I was uneasy at it, because I perceived by his countenance that it was not

for want of talents, but from caprice and ill-humour. It was but too evident afterwards, when we went to take a walk; for whilst I was talking and laughing with the vicar's daughter, the countenance of this gentleman, which before was none of the pleasantest, became so dark and angry, that Charlotte pulled me by the sleeve to make me desist. Nothing concerns me more than to see men torment one another; particularly when in the flower of their age, in the very season of pleasure, they waste their few short days of sunshine in quarrels and disputes, and only feel their error when it is too late to repair it. This dwelt upon my mind; and during our collation, the conversation turning upon the happiness and misery of this life, I could not help taking that opportunity to inveigh bitterly against ill-humour. "We are apt," said I, "to complain that we have but few happy days; and it appears to me that we have very little right to complain. If our hearts were always

in a proper disposition to receive the good things which Heaven sends us, we should acquire strength to support the evil when they came upon us." "But," says the vicar's wife, "we cannot always command our tempers; so much depends on the constitution; when the body is ill at ease, the mind is so likewise." "Well, let us look upon this disposition as a disease," I answered, "and see if there is no remedy for it." "That is more to the purpose," said Charlotte; "and I think, indeed, a great deal might be done in this respect. I know, for example, that when any thing disturbs my temper, I go into the garden, I sing a lively air, and it vanishes." "That is what I meant," I replied; "ill-humour may be compared to sloth. It is natural to man to be indolent; but if once we get the better of our indolence, we then go on with alacrity, and find a real pleasure in being active." The daughter listened to me with attention. The young man objected, that we were

not masters of ourselves, and still less of our feelings. I told him, that it was a disagreeable sensation which was in question, and one that every body wished to get rid of; that we don't know how far our strength will go, till we have tried it; that the sick consult physicians, and submit to the most scrupulous regimen, and the most nauseous medicines, to recover their health. I then perceived that the good old man inclined his head to listen to our discourse. I therefore raised my voice, and addressing myself to him, said; "There has been a great deal of preaching against all crimes, Sir; but I don't know that any body has hitherto preached against the spleen." "It is for those who preach in towns," said he, "to discourse on that subject, for peasants don't know what the spleen is; though indeed it would not be amiss to do it here from time to time, if it was only for my wife and the steward." We all laughed, and so did he very heartily; but it gave him a fit of coughing,



which interrupted us for some time. Mr. Smith resumed the subject. "You have made this indisposition of temper a crime," said he; "that appears to me to be carrying the matter too far." "It is not, though," I answered, "if what is pernicious to ourselves, and to others, deserves the name of crime. Is it not enough that we are without the power to make one another happy, but must we deprive each other of that satisfaction, which, left to ourselves, we might often be capable of enjoying? Shew me the man who has ill-humour, and who hides it; who bears the whole burthen of it himself, without interrupting the pleasures of those about him! No; ill-humour arises from a consciousness of our own want of merit; from a discontent which always accompanies that envy which foolish vanity engenders. We dislike to see people happy; unless their happiness is the work of our own hands." Charlotte looked at me, and smiled at the heat with which I spoke; and some tears  
which

which I perceived in the eyes of the young woman, inclined me to continue. "Woe unto those," I said, "who make use of their power over a human heart, to deprive it of the simple pleasure it would naturally enjoy. All the favours, all the attention in the world, cannot for a moment make amends for the loss of that happiness which a cruel tyranny destroys."

My heart was full; some recollections pressed upon my mind, and my eyes were filled with tears.

"We should say to ourselves every day," I exclaimed, "what good can I do to my friends? I can only endeavour not to interrupt them in their pleasures, and try to augment the happiness which I myself partake of. When their souls are tormented by a violent passion, when their hearts are rent with grief, I cannot give them relief for a moment.

"And when at length a fatal malady seizes the unhappy being whose untimely

grave was prepared by thy hand—when stretched out and exhausted, he raises his dim eyes to heaven, and the damps of death are on his brow—then thou standest before him like a condemned criminal; thou seest thy fault, but 'tis too late; thou feelest thy want of power; thou feelest, with bitterness, that all thou canst give, all thou canst do, will not restore the strength of thy unfortunate victim, nor procure for him a moment of consolation!”

In pronouncing these words, the remembrance of a like scene, at which I had been present, came with all its weight upon my heart, I put my handkerchief to my eyes, I got up and left the company. The voice of Charlotte, who called me to go home, made me recollect myself; and in our way back, with what tenderness she chid me! how kindly she represented to me, that the too eager interest, and the heat with which I entered into every thing, would wear me out, and shorten my days!

—Yes,

—Yes, my angel, I will take care of myself; I will live for you.

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## LETTER XVI.

July 6.

Charlotte is still with her dying friend; and is still the same, still the same kind attentive creature, who softens pain, and gives happiness whichever way she turns. She went out yesterday with her little sisters; I knew it, and went to meet her, and we walked together. In coming back towards the town, we stopped at the spring I am so fond of, and which is become a thousand times dearer to me now that Charlotte has sat by the side of it. I looked around me, and recalled the time I had passed there, when my heart was unoccupied and alone. "Dear spring," said I, "I have not since that time enjoyed cool repose by your fresh

fresh stream; and often passing hastily by, I have not even seen you." I fixed my eyes upon Charlotte, and was struck with a lively sense of all that I possess in her.

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## L E T T E R   X V I I .

July 8.

**H**OW can I be so childish? I depend on every turn and change of countenance. How can I be so childish?—We have been at Walheim: the ladies went in a carriage, but got out to walk. Whilst we were walking, I thought the eyes of Charlotte—but I was mistaken—However, I will tell you in two words, for I am now dying with sleep. When the ladies got into their coach again, young W. Selbstadt, Andran, and myself, were talking to them at the window; the young men were gay, and full of spirits; I watch-  
ed



ed Charlotte's eyes; they wandered from one to the other, but did not light on me; upon me, who stood there motionless, and who saw nothing but her. My heart was bidding her adieu a thousand and a thousand times, and she did not even look at me. The coach drove off, and a tear was ready to start. I followed her with my eyes; I saw her put her head out of the window. Alas! was it for me that she looked out? I know not; and uncertainty is my comfort perhaps.—Good night.—I see my own weakness.

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## L E T T E R XVIII.

July 10.

**Y**OU should see how foolish I look in company when her name is mentioned, when any body talks of her, particularly when they ask me how I like her? —How I *like* her! I detest the phrase.  
What

What must the man be who *liked* Charlotte, whose heart and senses were not totally captivated by her?—How I *like* her!—A little while ago, I was asked how I *liked* Ossian

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## L E T T E R   X I X .

July 13.

**N**O, I am not mistaken—I read in her eyes that she is interested for me; I feel it. And I may believe my own heart, which tells me that she—dare I say it?—Can I pronounce the divine words?—she loves me.

That she loves me! Oh! how the idea exalts me in my own eyes! How—I may tell you, for you are capable of understanding it—How I honour myself since I have been beloved by her! Is it presumption, or is it a consciousness of the truth? I do not know a man who is capable of supplanting

supplanting me in the heart of Charlotte :—And yet when she speaks of Albert with warmth, with tenderness, I feel like an ambitious courtier, who is deprived of his honours and his titles ; or the soldier whose sword is taken from him by his prince.

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## L E T T E R XX.

July 16.

**H**OW my heart beats, and my blood boils in my veins, when by accident I touch her finger !—when my feet meet hers under the table, I draw them back with precipitation as from a furnace ; but a secret power again presses me forward, and disorders all my senses.

Her innocent and easy heart does not know, that all these little marks of confidence and friendship make my torment. When she puts her hand upon mine, when

in

in the eagerness of conversation she comes close to me, and her balmy breath reaches my lips, the sudden effect of lightning is not stronger. Ah ! this celestial confidence !—if ever I should dare—you understand me, my dear friend :—my heart is not so corrupt ; it is weak, very weak ; and is not that a degree of corruption ?

I look upon her as sacred, and in her presence I desire nothing ; when I am near her I am all soul. There is a favourite air of hers, which she plays on the harpsicord with the energy of an angel : it is striking, touching, and yet simple. As soon as she begins it, care, sorrow, pain, all is forgotten. I believe I perfectly comprehend all that is related of the magic of ancient music. At times when I am ready to shoot myself, she plays that air, and the darkness which hung over me is dispersed, and I breathe freely again.

LETTER

## LETTER XXI.

July 18.

WHAT is the whole world to our hearts without love? It is the optic machine of the Savoyards without light. As soon as the little lamp appears, the figures shine on the whitened wall; and if love only shews us shadows which pass away, yet still we are happy, when, like children, we are transported with the splendid phantoms.

I shall not see Charlotte to-day; company, which I could not avoid, hinders me. What do you think I have done? I sent the little boy who waits upon me, that I might at least see somebody that had been near her. With what impatience I waited for his return, and with what pleasure I saw him! I should certainly have taken him in my arms if I had not been ashamed.

The Bologna stone, when placed in the  
sun,



sun, attracts the rays, and retains them so as to give light a considerable time after it is removed into the dark. The boy was just this to me. The idea that Charlotte's eyes had dwelt on his features, the buttons of his coat, the cape, made all of them so interesting, so dear to me—I would not at that moment have taken a thousand crowns for him, I was so happy to see him! Beware of laughing at me, my good friend: nothing which makes us happy is an illusion.

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## L E T T E R XXII.

July 19.

**A**S soon as I opened my window this morning, I said, "To-day I shall see her," and I calmly looked at the sun. I shall see her, and I have no other wish to form for the whole day: all, all is included in that thought.

L E T T E R

## LETTER XXIII.

July 20.

I Cannot yet approve the scheme you have of sending me to the ambassador of — at ——. I don't love subordination, and we all know too that he is a hard disagreeable man to have any connection with. You say my mother wishes to have me employed. I could not help laughing at that.—Am I not employed enough? and if it is in shelling pease and beans, it is in fact the same. In this world, all is misery; and those who, in compliance with others, are endeavouring to acquire riches or honours, are, in my opinion, madmen.

F LETTER

## L E T T E R XXIV.

July 24.

SINCE you are so much interested about my progress in drawing, I am sorry to tell you, that I have hitherto done very little in that way. I never was in a happier disposition; I never understood Nature better; I never was more sensible of the sublime parts of it, nor entered more minutely into its details; and yet I don't know how to express the state in which I am: my executive powers fail me; every thing swims and dances before me, and I cannot make an outline. I think I should succeed better in relief, if I was to use clay or wax: I shall try, if this lasts any longer. Three times I have begun Charlotte's picture, and three times have dishonoured my pencil. I don't know how it is; not long ago I was very happy in taking likenesses: I have made  
a shadow

a shadow of her, and I must content myself with that.

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## L E T T E R   XXV.

July 27.

**I** HAVE very often resolved not to see her so often. It is more easy to talk than to act. Every day I yield to the temptation ; and when I return at night, I say I won't go on the morrow ; but on the morrow I find myself with her again, and don't know how it has happened. Don't imagine, however, that good reasons are always wanting. One evening she said, " You'll come again to-morrow : " I could not then avoid going. Another day, the weather is so fine I must walk.—I walk to Walheim ; when I am there, it is but half a league farther. My grandmother used to tell us a story of a

mountain of load-stone : When any vessels came near it, the nails flew to the mountain, and the unhappy crew perished amidst the disjointed planks.

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## L E T T E R XXVI.

**A**LBERT is arrived. Were he the best and most perfect of men, were I in every respect his inferior, it would not be less insupportable to me to see him in possession of so many charms, so many perfections. I have seen him, my dear friend ; I have seen this happy husband ; he is a well-bred worthy man, whom one cannot help liking. Happily for me I was not at the first meeting ; my heart would have been torn to pieces ; and he has been so kind as not to give Charlotte a single kiss before me. Heaven reward him for it ! The esteem he has for this charming



charming girl must make me love him. He shews a regard for me ; I am certainly indebted to Charlotte for it. Women always endeavour to keep up a good understanding between their friends : it don't often succeed ; when it does, they only are the gainers by it. Seriously, I cannot help esteeming Albert. The coolness and calmness of his temper form a striking contrast with the impetuosity of mine ; and yet he has a great deal of feeling, and knows the value of that happiness which he possesses. He seems very little subject to ill-humour ; which, you know, of all faults, is the one I am least inclined to excuse.

He looks upon me as a man of understanding and taste. My attachment to Charlotte, the lively interest I shew for every thing that relates to her, augment his triumph and his love. I will not enquire whether he may not, in private, sometimes teaze her with little jealousies ; in his place, at least, I know I should not

be quite easy. Be that as it will, the pleasure I enjoyed with Charlotte is at an end. Shall I call it folly or blindness?—But it wants no name—the thing speaks for itself. Before Albert came, I knew all that I now know; I knew I could have no pretensions to her, and I did not claim any; and now here I am, like an idiot, staring with astonishment, because another comes and takes her from me. I gnash my teeth, I bite my lips, I hate and despise myself: but I should despise the man still more, who could tell me coldly, that I must reconcile myself to it, for it could not be otherwise. Let me escape from all such silly personages!—Yesterday, after having rambled a long time in the woods, I returned to Charlotte's house. I found her sitting with Albert under an arbour. Not knowing what to do, I played the fool, and was guilty of a thousand extravagancies. "For heaven's sake," said Charlotte to-day, "let me beg of you that we may have no more scenes like that  
of

of last night; you are quite alarming in your violent spirits." Between ourselves, I have taken to watch Albert; and when he is engaged I run there, and am always pleased when I find her alone.

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## L E T T E R XXVII.

August 8.

**B**ELIEVE me, my dear friend, when I talked of the people who might advise me to reconcile myself to this event, and said, "Away with such advisers!" I was very far from thinking you could possibly be one of them: but, in fact, you are in the right. I will only make one objection. Of two opposite methods which are proposed, one seldom takes either. There are as many various lines of conduct and opinion, as there are turns of feature between an aquiline nose and a flat one.

F 4

Give

Give me leave then to grant all your conclusions, and contrive a middle way for myself, to slip between them.

You say to me, that I either have hopes of obtaining Charlotte, or that I have not. In the first case, I ought to follow my point, and press forward to the accomplishment of my wishes: In the second case, you tell me to act as a man, and throw aside the unfortunate affection, which will consume all my strength. This is very justly said, my dear friend, and very easy too to say.

Would you require of a feeble man, oppressed by a low and languid disease, which is wearing out his constitution by degrees, that he should put an end to his miseries by a pistol or dagger? Does not the same disease, which is consuming his life, at the same time deprive him of the resolution to put an end to it?

You might, in return, send me a simile of the same kind.—Who would not have an arm cut off, rather than risk his life by deferring

deferring the operation? Perhaps many would.—But let us leave these comparisons.

There are times in which I have resolution, and should perhaps go away, if I knew where to go.

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## L E T T E R XXVIII.

August 10.

**I**F I were not deprived of all understanding, I might lead the happiest life in the world here; so many agreeable circumstances, and of a kind to make a worthy man happy, are seldom united. Alas! I feel it but too sensibly! happiness depends solely on the mind! To be considered as making part of the most amiable family in the world, to be beloved by the father as a son, by the children as a father, and by Charlotte—and this worthy Albert, who



who does not interrupt my happiness by any stroke of ill-humour, who salutes me cordially, and prefers me to every thing but Charlotte! My dear friend, you would like to hear us, when we talk together, and talk of Charlotte. In fact, nothing can be more ridiculous than our connection, and yet I am frequently softened even to tears. When he talks to me of Charlotte's most respectable mother; when he describes to me her last moments, and the affecting scene in which she gave up to her daughter the care of her children and family; when he tells me how Charlotte immediately assumed another character; what a skilful œconomist, and an active housewife she became, and what a tender mother; every day displaying all these qualities, and yet preserving her agreeable cheerfulness and vivacity; I walk by the side of him, pick up flowers by the way, with great attention make a nosegay, and—throw it into the first brook I come to, and watch it as it glides gently down. I don't recollect

whether I told you that Albert is to settle here. He is much esteemed at court, and has obtained a place which brings him in a good income. I have seen few men so punctual and methodical in business.

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## L E T T E R    X X I X .

August 12.

**A**LBERT is certainly one of the best men in the world. I had a very singular conversation with him yesterday, which I must relate to you. I went to take leave of him; for I took it into my head to spend a few days in the mountains, from whence I now write to you. As I was walking up and down his room, I observed his pistols. I asked him to lend them to me for my journey. "They are at your service," said he, "if you will take the trouble of loading them, for  
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I only keep them there for form." I took one up, and he continued : " Ever since I had like to have suffered for my precaution, I have left off keeping loaded fire-arms." I desired him to tell me what the accident was. " I was with a friend in the country," he said; " my pistols were not loaded, and I slept with perfect tranquillity: but one rainy afternoon, when I was sitting and doing nothing, it came into my head, I don't know how, that the house might be attacked, and that these pistols might be of use, and that we might—in short, you know how one goes on when one has nothing better to do. I gave my pistols to my servant to clean and load. He was playing with the maid and trying to frighten her; and, God knows how, the pistol went off: the rammer was in; it went against the girl's hand, and tore off her thumb. You may imagine the lamentations and noise we had; and moreover a surgeon's bill to pay. Since that accident my pistols have remained

mained as you see them. What, indeed, is the use of precaution? we cannot, my dear friend, foresee the dangers which threaten us." Do you know, I like every thing in this man, except his *indeeds*; and every rule has an exception. But he is so correct in his behaviour, of such perfect veracity, that if he thinks he has risked any thing, or been too general, or not strictly true, he never ceases to moderate, and qualify, and extenuate, till at length it appears that he has said nothing at all. Albert now, according to custom, was immersed in his text: I ceased to hear him, and was lost in reveries. - In these reveries, I put the mouth of the pistol to my forehead. "What do you mean," cried Albert, turning back the pistol. "It is not charged," said I. "And if it is not," he answered with impatience, "what do you mean by it? I cannot comprehend how a man should be so mad as to blow out his brains; and the bare idea of it shocks me." "What right has any man," said I, "in

“in speaking of an action, immediately to pronounce that it is mad, or wise, or good, or bad? What is meant by all this? Have you carefully examined the interior motives for the action? Have you fairly unfolded all the reasons which gave rise to it, and which made it necessary? If you did all this, you would not be so quick with your decision.” “However,” said Albert, “you will allow that some actions are criminal, whatever were the motives for committing them.”—I granted it, and shrugged up my shoulders.

“But still, my good friend,” I said, “there are more exceptions to make. Theft is a crime: but the man who is driven to it by extreme poverty, with no design but to save himself and his family from perishing for want, must he too be punished? and is he not rather an object of our compassion? Who shall throw the first stone at a husband that, in the first heat of just resentment, sacrifices a faithless wife, and her perfidious seducer? or  
at



at a young girl whom love only has led astray? Even our laws, our pedantic laws, our cold, cruel laws, relent and withdraw their punishment."

"These examples are very different," said Albert; "because a man, under the influence of violent passion, is incapable of reflection, and is looked upon as drunk, or out of his senses." "Oh! you people of sound understandings," I replied, smiling, "are very ready to pronounce sentence, and talk of extravagance, and madness, and intoxication; you are quiet, and care for nothing; you avoid the drunken man, and detest the extravagant; you pass on the other side like the Priest, and like the Pharisee you thank God that you are not like one of them. I have more than once experienced the effects of drinking; my passions have always bordered upon extravagance, and I am not ashamed to own it. Do I not find that those superior men, who have done any great or extraordinary  
action,

action, have in all times been treated as if they were intoxicated or mad ?

“ And in private life too, is it not insufferable, that if a young man does any thing uncommonly noble or generous, the world immediately says he is out of his senses ? Take shame to yourselves, ye people of discretion ; take shame to yourselves, ye sages of the earth.”—“ This now is one of your extravagant flights,” said Albert ; “ you always go beyond the mark : and here you are most undoubtedly wrong, to compare suicide, which is in question, with great actions ; for it can only be looked upon as a weakness. It is much easier to die than to bear a life of misery with fortitude.”

I was upon the point of breaking off the conversation immediately ; for nothing puts me out of all patience, like a common-place opinion, which means nothing, whilst I am talking from my inmost heart. However, I got the better of myself ; for having often heard this pitiful argument,

I now

I now begin to be used to it. But I answered with some warmth, "You call this a weakness; beware of being carried away by sounds! Suppose a people groaning under the yoke of tyranny; do you call them weak, when at length they throw it off and break their chains? The man who, to rescue his house from the flames, exerts all his powers, lifts burthens with ease that he could scarcely move when his mind was at peace; he who attacks and puts to flight half a score of his enemies; are these weak people? My good friend, if resistance is a mark of strength, can the highest degree of resistance be called a weakness?" Albert looked stedfastly at me, and said, "Begging your pardon, I don't think the examples you have brought have any relation to the subject in question." "That may very likely be," I answered, "for I have been often told, that my way of combining things appeared extravagant. But let us try to set the matter in another light; let us examine

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what

what is the situation of a man who resolves to free himself from the burthen of life—a burthen that is in general so much desired—and let us enter into his feelings; for we cannot otherwise reason fairly on the subject.

“Human nature,” I continued, “has certain limits; there is a degree of joy, grief, pain, which it is able to endure, and beyond that degree it is annihilated.

“We are not, therefore, to enquire whether a man is weak or strong, but whether he can pass the bounds of nature, and the measure of his sufferings, either of mind or body; and I think it is as absurd to say that a man who destroys himself is a coward, as to call a man a coward who dies of a malignant fever.” “Paradox, all paradox!” exclaimed Albert. “Not so paradoxical as you imagine,” I replied; “you will allow that we call a disease mortal, in which nature is so severely attacked, and her strength so far exhausted,”

hausted, that what remains is not sufficient to raise her up, and set her going again.

“ Let us apply this to the mind ; let us see how ideas work, and how impressions fix upon it, till at length a violent passion takes entire possession, destroys all the powers it possessed when at ease, and entirely subdues it.

“ It is in vain that a man of sound understanding and cool temper sees the miserable situation of a wretch in such circumstances ; it is in vain that he counsels him : 'tis like the man in health, who sits by the bed of his dying friend, but is unable to communicate to him the smallest portion of his strength.”

Albert thought this too general. I quoted the girl who lately drowned herself, and made him recollect her story—

“ A good young creature, so accustomed to the narrow sphere of domestic labour, and the business of the week, that she knew of no pleasure but taking a walk in the fields on a Sunday, dancing once per-



haps in the holidays, and the rest of her time only talking with her next neighbour of the news and little quarrels of the village. At length her heart feels new and unknown wishes; all that used to please her, now by degrees becomes tasteless, till she meets with a man to whom a new affection invisibly attaches her; from that time, her hopes are all centered in him; the whole surrounding world is forgotten by her; she sees, hears, desires nothing but him; he alone occupies all her thoughts. Her heart having never felt the baneful pleasure arising from light vanity, her wishes tend immediately to the object of them; she hopes to belong to him, and in eternal bonds expects to enjoy all the desires of her heart, and to realize the ideas of happiness which she has formed. His repeated promises confirm her hopes; his fondness encreases her passion; her whole soul is lost and drowned in pleasure; her heart is all rapture: At length she stretches out her arms to embrace the  
object

object of her vows—All is vanished away; her lover forsakes her.—Amazed! petrified! she stands senseless before the abyss of misery she sees encompass her; all around is darkness; for her there is no prospect, nor hope, nor consolation: she is forsaken by him in whom her life was bound up; and in the wide universe which is before her, and among so many who might repair her loss, she feels alone, and abandoned by the whole world. Thus blinded, thus impelled, by the piercing grief which wrings her heart, she plunges into the deep to put an end to her torments. Such, Albert, is the history of many men: And is it not a parallel case with illness? Nature has no way to escape: her powers exhausted, and contending powers to struggle with, death must be the consequence. Woe unto the man who could hear this situation described, and who could say, “A foolish girl! why did not she wait till time had worn off the impression? her despair would have

been softened, and she would have found another lover to comfort her." One might as well say, "A fool! he died of a fever: why did not he wait till he had recovered his strength, till his blood was calm? then all would have been well, and he would have been alive now."

Albert, who did not allow the comparison to be just, made many objections: amongst the rest, that I had only brought the example of a simple and ignorant girl;—but he could not comprehend how a man of sense, whose views are more enlarged, and who sees such various consolations, should ever suffer himself to fall into such a state of despair. "My good friend," said I, "whatever is the education of a man, whatever is his understanding, still he is a man, and the little reason that he possesses, either does not act at all, or acts very feebly, when the passions are let loose, or rather when the boundaries of human nature close in upon him.—But we will talk of this another time," I said,

said, and took up my hat—Alas! my heart was full—and we parted without conviction on either side.—How rarely do men understand one another!

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## L E T T E R    X X X .

August 15.

**I**T is most certain that what renders one man necessary to another, is a similarity of taste and sentiment. I see that Charlotte would not lose me without regret; and as to the children, they every day ask me to come again on the morrow. I went this afternoon to tune Charlotte's harpsicord: but I could not contrive to do it; all the children came about me, and asked me to tell them a story. Charlotte was desirous that I should please them, and I told my very best tale of the prince that was served by dwarfs. I improve by this exercise

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myself,

myself, I assure you, and am quite surprised at the impression these stories make upon the children. If I invent an incident at any time, and afterwards omit it, the little arch rogues never fail to tell me, it was not so the first time; so that I now endeavour to relate with great exactness, and without any pauses, and in a tone of voice that is almost recitative. I see by this how much an author hurts his works by altering them even for the better. The first impression is readily received. A man will believe the incredible, it will be engraved on his memory; and woe unto those who would afterwards endeavour to efface it.

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### LETTER XXXI.

**W**HAT constitutes the happiness of man, must it then change and become the source of his misery? That ardent



dent sentiment which animated my heart with the love of nature, which poured in upon me a torrent of delight, which brought all paradise before me, is now become an insupportable torrent, a demon which pursues and harrasses me incessantly. In times past I contemplated, from the top of high rocks, the broad river which, far as eye can reach, waters this fertile plain. Every thing put forth and grew, and was expanded. Around me all was in motion. I saw these mountains covered to their summits with high and tufted trees, and the vallies in their various windings sheltered by smiling woods; the peaceful stream gently glided through the trembling reeds, and in its calm surface reflected the light clouds, which a soft zephyr kept suspended in the air. I heard the birds animating the woods with their song. Millions of insects danced in the purple rays of the sun. The arid rock afforded nourishment to the moss; and the sands below were covered with broom.

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The vivifying heat which animates all nature, was every where displayed before my eyes ; it filled and warmed my heart. I was lost in the idea of infinity. Stupendous mountains encompassed me ; precipices were before my feet ; torrents fell by the side of me ; impetuous rivers ran through the plain ; rocks and mountains resounded from afar ; and in the depths of the earth I saw innumerable powers in motion, and multiplying to infinity. All the beings of the creation, of a thousand tribes and a thousand forms, move upon the earth and in the air ; and man hides himself in his little hut, and says, " I am lord over this vast universe." Weak mortal ! all things appear little to you, for you are little yourself. Craggy mountains, deserts untrodden by the foot of man, even the unknown confines of the immense ocean, are animated by the breath of the Eternal, and every atom to which he has given existence and life, finds favour in his sight. Ah ! how often at that time has the sight  
of

of a sea-bird, which passed over my head, inspired me with the desire of being transported to the shore of the immeasurable waters, there to drink the pleasures of life as in a river, and to partake, if but for a moment, and with the confined powers of my soul, of the beatitude of the Creator, in whom we live, and move, and have our being !

My dear friend, the bare recollection of these times still gives me pleasure: the vehemence of mind with which I recall the sensations, which gives me faculties to express them, raises me above myself, and makes me doubly feel my present anguish.

The curtain drops, the scene is changed ; instead of prospects of eternal life, a bottomless pit is for ever opened before me. Can we say of any thing, that it exists, when all passes away, when time in its rapid progress carries every thing with it, and our transitory existence, hurried along by the torrent, is either swallowed up by the waves or dashed against the rocks ?

There is not a moment which does not prey upon me, and all around me; and every moment I am myself a destroyer. The most innocent walk deprives of life thousands of poor insects: one step destroys the fabric of the industrious ant, and turns a little world into a chaos! No, 'tis not the great and uncommon calamities of the world, the floods which sweep away whole villages, the earthquakes that swallow up our towns, which touch and affect me. What saps my heart, is that destroying, hidden power, which exists in every thing. Nature has formed nothing which does not consume itself, and every thing that is near it: so that, surrounded by earth and air, and by all the active powers, I wander with an aching heart; and the universe to me is as a fearful monster, which devours and regorges its food.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXII.

August 20.

**I**T is in vain that I stretch out my arms towards her, when I awake in the morning, after the ill-omened visions of night; 'tis in vain that I seek her, when an innocent dream has happily deceived me, and placed me by her side in the fields; I held her hand, I covered it with kisses: Alas! when half asleep, I still think I touch her, and then I wake entirely—torrents of tears flow from my oppressed heart! and, bereaved of all comfort, I weep over the woes to come.

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## LETTER XXXIII.

August 22.

**M**Y active spirits have degenerated into uneasy indolence:—I cannot employ myself; I cannot be idle. I cannot



not think ; I am no longer sensible of the beauties of nature, and books are distasteful to me.—When we give ourselves up, every thing fails us.—I wish sometimes I was a mechanic ; when I waked in the morning I should have some pursuit, some hope, a task at least for the day. I often envy Albert, when I see him buried in a heap of papers and parchments up to his eyes ; and I say to myself, In his place I should be happy.—I have more than once intended to write to you, and to the minister, for the employment which you think I might obtain. I believe myself I might have it : the minister has long shewn a regard for me, and has often told me that I ought to seek some employment. It is the business of an hour only : But when the fable recurs to me of the horse, who, being weary of his liberty, suffered himself to be saddled and bridled, and then found reason to repent ; I say, when this fable recurs to me, I don't know what to determine upon. Besides, my dear friend,

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this desire to change my situation, is it not the consequence of that restless, perturbed spirit, which would equally pursue me in every situation in life?

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## L E T T E R   XXXIV.

August 28.

**I**F my ills could admit of any cure, they would certainly be cured here.—This is my birth-day—Very early in the morning I received a little parcel from Albert: Upon opening it, I found one of the knots which Charlotte had on her sleeve the first time I saw her, and which I had several times asked her to give me. Albert had added two volumes in 12mo. of Wetstein's Homer, which I had wanted for some time, the Ernesti edition being inconvenient to carry with me when I walked out. You see how they prevent my wishes, how well they understand all those little

little attentions of friendship, so superior to the magnificent presents of the great, which are humiliating. I kissed the sleeve-knot a thousand times, and every time I breathed delight from the memory of happy days—days which will never return. Such, my friend, is our fate—I do not murmur at it.—The flowers of life do but just show themselves.—How many pass away, and leave no trace behind! how few are succeeded by fruit, and the fruit how rarely does it ripen!—Alas! is it not strange, my dear friend, that we should suffer to perish and to decay, the little which remains and ripens?—Adieu!

It is the finest weather in the world.—In Charlotte's orchard I often climb into a tree, and choose pears for her; she stands under it, and takes them from me as I gather them.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXV.

August 30.

**W**RETCH that I am, do I not take pleasure in deceiving myself, and am I not without understanding?—What will become of this ardent and unbounded passion?—I address no prayers but to Charlotte; my imagination sees nothing but her; all that surrounds me is of no account, but as it relates to her.—And in this state I enjoy some happy hours, till I am obliged to tear myself from her: and to that, alas! my heart often forces me. When I have been sitting by her for two or three hours, quite absorbed by her figure, her attitudes, her divine expressions, the sentiment by degrees takes possession of me, and is worked up to the highest excess: my sight is confused; my breathing is oppressed; I hear nothing; my veins swell; a palpitation seizes my heart, and I scarcely know where I am, or whe-

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ther I exist. Then, if soft sensations do not prevail, as it sometimes happens,—if Charlotte does not at least allow me the melancholy consolation to bathe her hand with my tears, I am obliged to leave her, and run and wander about the country. I climb steep rocks; I break my way through copses, amongst thorns and briars which tear me to pieces, and I feel a little relief. Sometimes I lie stretched on the ground, overcome with fatigue, and dying with thirst: sometimes, late in the night, when the moon shines upon my head, I lean against a bending tree in some sequestered forest, to ease my wrung feet; and quite worn out and exhausted, I sleep till break of day. Oh, my friend! the dismal cell, the sackcloth, the girdle with sharp points of iron, would be indulgence and luxury in comparison of what I now suffer.—Adieu.—I see no end to these torments but the grave.

LETTER



## LETTER XXXVI.

September 2.

**I** Will go.—My dear friend, I thank you; I was in doubt, and you determine me. I have resolved to leave her this fortnight;—it must be so.—She is returned to the town, and is at the house of a friend; and Albert—and—I will go from hence.

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## LETTER XXXVII.

September 3.

**W**HAT a night! I can henceforth bear any thing. My friend, I shall see her no more. Ah! why cannot I fall on your neck, and with floods of tears express all the passions which tear my heart? I am sitting down, and trying to breathe  
H 2 freely,

freely, and doing all that is in my power to compose my mind;—I am waiting for day-light and the post-horses. Charlotte is at rest; she does not know that she will see me no more. I tore myself away; and had the resolution not to betray my intention during a conversation which lasted two hours.—Great God! such a conversation!

Albert promised me to come with Charlotte into the garden immediately after supper. I was upon the terrace, under the thick chesnut-trees, and saw the setting sun; my eyes for the last time saw him sink beneath this delightful valley and silent stream. I had often been upon the same spot with Charlotte, and seen the same glorious sight, and now—I walked up and down this walk, so dear to me: a secret sympathy had often detained me there before I knew Charlotte; and we were pleased when, early in our acquaintance, we found we had both had the same predilection for this place. Under the chesnut-

chestnut-trees there is an extensive view— But I remember that I mentioned this to you before in a letter, and described how high copses inclose the end of it; how the walk through the wood becomes darker and darker, till it ends in a recess, formed by the thickest trees, and which has all the charms of gloomy solitude. I still remember the tender melancholy which came over my heart the first time I entered this silent deep retreat. I had certainly a secret foreboding, that it would one day be the scene of my happiness and of my torment.

After I had spent half an hour in the opposite ideas of going away and returning again, I heard them come up the terrace. I flew to meet them, and shuddering, I took Charlotte's hand, and kissed it. Just as we reached the top of the terrace, the moon appeared behind a hill covered with wood. Conversing on various subjects, we came to the dark recess: Charlotte went in and sat down; Albert sat

down by her side; I did the same.—But my agitation did not suffer me to remain long seated: I got up and stood before her, walked backwards and forwards, sat down again;—it was a state of violent emotions.

Charlotte made us observe a fine effect of moon-light at the end of the wood, which appeared the more striking and brilliant from the darkness which surrounded the spot where we were. We remained for some time silent; and then Charlotte said, “Whenever I walk by moon-light, it brings to my remembrance all those who were dear to me, and who are no more; and I think of death and a future state.—Yes,” continues she, with a firm but touching voice, “we shall still exist; but, Werter, shall we find one another out? Shall we know one another again? What presages have you? What is your opinion?”

“Charlotte,” I said, holding out my hand to her, and my eyes full of tears,  
“we

“ we shall again see one another here and hereafter.” I could say no more.—My dear friend, should she have put the question to me, just when the thoughts of a cruel separation filled my heart?

“ And those persons who have been dear to us,” said she, “ and who are now no more, do they know that when we are happy, we recall them to our memory with tenderness?—The shade of my mother hovers round me, when in a still evening I sit in the midst of her children—when I see them assembled about me, as they used to be assembled about her! I then raise my swimming eyes to Heaven, and wish she could look down upon us, and see that I fulfil the promise which I made to her in her last moments, to be a mother to her children! A hundred times I have exclaimed, Pardon, dearest of mothers, pardon me, if I am not to them all that you were!—Alas! I do all that I can; they are properly cloathed and fed, and still more, they are well educated and be-

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loved!



loved! If you could behold our mutual attachment, the harmony that subsists amongst us, you would give thanks to that Being to whom, dying, you addressed such fervent prayers for our happiness." This she said, my dear friend; but who could repeat all her words? how should cold unfeeling characters catch the expressions of sentiment and genius? Albert gently interrupted her—"My charming Charlotte, you are too much affected: I know these recollections are dear to you, but I beg—" Oh! Albert," said she, "you do not forget, I know you do not, the evenings when we three, during the absence of my father, used to sit at our little round table, after the children were gone to bed. You often had a book in your hand, but you seldom read any of it—and who would not have preferred the conversation of that delightful woman to every thing in the world? She was beautiful, mild, chearful, and always active. God knows how often I have knelt  
before

before him, and prayed that I might be like her."

I threw myself at her feet; I took her hands, and wetting them with my tears, said, "Charlotte! Charlotte! the benediction of Heaven is upon you, and the spirit of your mother."—"If you had but known her," she said, and pressed my hand—"she was worthy of being known to you."—I was motionless; never had I received praise so flattering. "And this woman was to die in the flower of her age; the youngest of her children was but six months old. Her illness was short; she was resigned and calm: nothing gave her any anxiety but her children, and more particularly the youngest. When she found her end approaching, she bade me go and fetch them; and when they were all around her bed, the little ones who did not know their misfortune, and the great ones who were quite overcome with sorrow, she raised her feeble hands to Heaven, hung over them, and  
prayed

prayed for them, then kissed them one after the other, sent them back, and said to me, "Be you their mother." I held out my hand to her. "You promise much, my child; a mother's fondness and a mother's care. Your tears of affection and gratitude have often shewn me that you felt what was a mother's tenderness—shew such tenderness to your brothers and sisters: and to your father be dutiful and faithful as a wife; you will be his comfort." She asked for him. He was gone out to hide the bitterness of his grief; he felt all that he was to lose, and his heart was in agonies.

"You, Albert, were in the room. She heard somebody move; asked who it was, and desired you to come to her. She looked at us both with great composure and satisfaction in her countenance, and said, "They will be happy, they will be happy with one another!"—Albert, taking her in his arms, cried out, "Yes, Charlotte, we are and shall be happy."

Even

Even the calm Albert was moved ;—I was quite out of my senses.

“ And such a woman,” she continued, “ was to leave us, Werter !—Great God ! must we thus part with every thing we hold dear in the world ? Nobody feels this more keenly than children ; they cried and lamented for a long time afterwards, that black men had carried away their dear mama !”

Charlotte got up ;—it roused me—but I remained sitting, and held her hand. “ Let us go,” said she ; “ it is quite time.” She drew away her hand ; I grasped it still closer. “ We shall see one another again,” I said ; “ we shall find one another out ; under whatever form it is, we shall know one another. I am going ; yes, I am going of my own accord ; but if it was for ever, it would be more than I could bear. Adieu, Charlotte ! adieu, Albert ! we shall see one another again.”—Yes, to-morrow, I fancy,” she added, smiling. I felt the word to-  
*morrow.*

*morrow.* Alas ! she scarcely knew when she withdrew her hand from me.—She went down the walk : I stood and followed her with my eyes, then threw myself on the ground in a passion of tears ; I got up again, and ran up to the terrace, and there I still saw, under the shade of the lime-trees, her white gown waving near the garden-gate. I stretched out my arms, and she disappeared !

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## L E T T E R   XXXVIII.

20th October.

**I** Arrived here yesterday. The minister is indisposed, and will not go out for some days. If he was less peevish and morose all would do well. I see it but too plainly, Heaven has destined me to severe trials : but I won't be disheartened ; one may bear any thing with a little levity.

I can



I can scarcely help smiling at the word which has just escaped me ; a little of that levity, which I am totally without, would make me the happiest of men. And must I despair of my faculties, and of the gifts of nature, whilst others of far inferior strength and talents are parading before me with the utmost satisfaction in themselves ? Great God ! amidst the blessings thou has deigned to shower down upon me, why was I not endowed with self-complacency and confidence ? But patience, and all will I hope be better ; for I will own to you, my dear friend, that you were in the right : since I have been obliged to mix continually with other men ; since I have had an opportunity of observing their designs, their conduct, their conversation, I am become more easy, and more satisfied with myself. As we naturally compare ourselves with every thing we meet, our happiness or misery depends on the objects which are brought into comparison with us, and in this respect

spect nothing is more dangerous than solitude. There our imagination, which is ever disposed to rise, takes a new flight on the wings of fancy, and forms a chain of beings, of which we are the last and most inferior. All things appear greater than they really are, and all seem superior to us; and this operation of the mind is natural. We are continually feeling our own imperfections; we think we have observed in others, qualities which we have not, and conclude they also possess all we have ourselves; and thus we have made a perfect, a happy man:—but such a man exists only in our imaginations.

But when, in spite of weakness and disappointment, we direct our endeavours to one end, and steadily persevere in the pursuit of it, we often find that we have made more way, though continually tacking, than others with all the assistance of wind and tide; and yet that is a true judgment which we form of ourselves from our situation

tuation with others, whether we are on a line with them, or before them.

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## L E T T E R   XXXIX.

10th November.

**I** Begin to think my situation more tolerable; I am much occupied; and the number of actors, and the different parts they play, make a very amusing variety in the scene. I have made an acquaintance with the Count of C—, and I esteem him more and more every day. He is a man of strong understanding, and great discernment: but though he sees farther than other people, he is not therefore cold in his temper and manner; his sensibility surpasses all his other qualities. One morning that I went to speak to him upon business, he expressed a friendship for me; by the first word he perceived that

that we understood each other, and that he might talk to me in a style different from that he made use of with most of the others.

I cannot express the satisfaction I receive from the openness of his conduct with regard to me. It is the greatest of pleasures when a delicate mind thus lays itself open to one.

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## LETTER XL.

December 24.

**I** Forefaw it; the minister occasions me a number of vexations. 'Tis the most punctilious blockhead under heaven; he goes on step by step, with the trifling minuteness of an old woman. But how can a man be pleased with other people who is never satisfied with himself? I like to go on with business regularly and with alacrity;

crity; and when it is finished, that it should be finished. But not so with him; he is capable of returning my draught to me, and saying, "It will do; but go over it again however, there is always something to correct; one may find a better phrase, or a properer word."—I then lose all patience, and wish myself at the devil. Not a conjunction, not one connecting word must be omitted; and as to the transpositions, which I like, and which flow naturally from my pen, he is their mortal foe. If every sentence is not expressed exactly in the style of the office, he is quite lost. 'Tis deplorable to have any connection with such a personage.

The only thing which gives me satisfaction, is my intimacy with Count C—. He very frankly told me, the other day, how much he was displeased with the difficulties and delays of the minister; that people of his cast must make every thing troublesome to themselves, and to others: "But," added he, "one must submit,

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as



as a traveller that is obliged to climb over a mountain; if the mountain was not in the way, his road would undoubtedly be shorter, and more convenient, but in fine, there it is, and he must go over it."

The old man perceives the Count's preference for me: it makes him angry. When I am present, he takes every opportunity to depreciate the Count: I naturally take up his defence, and that increases his displeasure. Yesterday I was well aware that when he aimed a stroke at my friend, he meant that it should also hit me.—"For the common affairs of the world," said he, "the Count may do very well; his style is good, and he writes with facility; but, like other great geniuses, he has no solid learning." I longed to strike him; for to what purpose is argument with such a kind of animal? However, as that was not possible, I answered, with some warmth, that every respect was due to him, both for his understanding and his character; that he was

the only man I had ever met with, whose extensive genius raised him so high above the common level, and who yet retained all his activity in business. This was algebra to his conceptions; and I withdrew, lest some new absurdity in him should raise my choler too much. It is you that are the authors of my ill-fortune; you, all of you, who forced me to bend my neck to this yoke, and preached activity to me. If the man who plants potatoes, and carries them to town on market-days, is not a more active being than I am, then let me work ten years longer at the cursed galley to which I am now chained.

And distaste and lassitude, those fashionable miseries which reign amongst the silly people who affect an unmixed society; the ambition of rank! how they toil, how they watch to gain precedence! What poor and contemptible passions, and how plain to be seen! We have a woman here, for example, who never ceases to entertain the company with accounts of her fa-

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mily, and her estates. Any stranger who heard her would suppose she was a silly creature, whose head was turned by some slight pretence at least to rank, or the lordship of a manor; but, still more ridiculous, she is the daughter of a steward's clerk in this neighbourhood! I cannot conceive how the human race can so debase itself.

I do indeed every day perceive more and more how absurd it is to judge of others by one's self. And it is with so much difficulty that I stop the ferment of my blood, and keep my heart at peace, that I very readily leave every one to pursue the path he has chosen; but at the same time I ask a like permission for myself.

These paltry distinctions between the inhabitants of the same town, are what disturb me most. I know perfectly well, that inequality of conditions is necessary, and how much I myself gain by it. But I would not have this institution come in  
my

my way and hinder me, when I might enjoy some pleasure, some shadow of happiness upon this earth.

I have lately made an acquaintance with a Miss B. a very agreeable girl; who, notwithstanding the formality and stiffness of the people about her, has retained a very easy and unaffected manner. The first conversation we had together, equally pleased us both; and when we parted I desired leave to pay my respects to her; which she granted in so obliging a manner, that I waited with impatience for the time to avail myself of it. She is not of this place, but lives here with an aunt. The countenance of the old virago displeased me at first sight; however I paid her great attention, and often addressed myself to her. In about half an hour, I pretty nearly guessed what her niece has since acknowledged. This good aunt, who is in years, with a small fortune, and still smaller share of understanding, has no satisfaction but in the long list of her an-

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cestors;

cestors; no protection but her noble birth; this is the defence, the rampart with which she surrounds herself; and her only amusement is standing at her window to look down with sovereign contempt on the ignoble heads which pass under it in the street. This ridiculous old woman was formerly handsome, and many a young man was the sport of her caprice: that was the golden age. Her charms faded, she was forced to accept of an old half-pay officer, and be subservient to his will: that was the age of brass. Now she is a widow, and deserted; was it not for her agreeable niece, nobody would take notice of her:—this may truly be called the iron age.

LETTER



## LETTER XLI.

January 8, 1772.

**W**HAT men are these!—Form occupies their whole souls: they can employ their time and thoughts for a whole year together, in contriving how to get nearer, by one chair only, to the upper end of the table.—And don't call it idleness; for on the contrary they increase their labour, by giving to these trifles the time they ought to employ in business. Last week, in a party upon the ice in sledges, there was a dispute for precedence, and the party was immediately broken up.

The idiots! they do not see that 'tis not the place which constitutes real greatness: the man who enjoys the highest post very rarely acts the principal part; many a king is governed by his minister, and many a minister by his secretary. Who is in that case to be accounted

the first, and chief? Is it not the man who has the power, or the address to make the passions of others subservient to his own designs?

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## L E T T E R XLII.

January 20.

**I** MUST write to you from hence, my dear Charlotte; from a cottage where I have been obliged to take shelter from a violent storm. In all the time that I have spent in that melancholy town, amidst strangers—strangers indeed to this heart—I have not been impelled to write to you: but in this cottage, in this retirement, in this sort of imprisonment, whilst the snow and hail are driving against my little window, I find myself restored to you and to myself. The moment I entered, your figure presented itself before my eyes, and the remembrance of you filled

ed my heart. Oh ! my Charlotte, the sacred remembrance ! the tender recollections !—Gracious Heaven ! restore to me that first moment in which I beheld her !

• Could you but see me, my dear Charlotte, in that vortex where every thing dissipates, and nothing touches me ! My senses are dried up ; my heart is at no time full ; I never shed the soft tears of tenderness ; nothing, nothing touches me. I stand, as it were, before the raree-show ; I see the little puppets move, and I say to myself it is a deception of optics. I am amused with these puppets, or rather I am myself one of them. I take the hand of the man who stands next to me, I feel that it is made of wood, I shudder and draw mine back. I have found but one being here that is of the same order with you, a Miss B. She resembles you, my dear Charlotte, if indeed it is possible for any thing to resemble you. “ Ah ! ” you will say, “ he has learnt to make elegant

gant compliments.” And there is some truth in your observation. I have been prodigiously agreeable lately, not having it in my power to be any thing better. I have a great deal of wit too, and the women say that nobody understands better how to deal out panegyric—“and *lies*,” you will add, for one always accompanies the other.—But I meant to talk to you of Miss B. She has great sensibility, and a superior understanding; her fine blue eyes shew evident marks of both. Her rank is a burthen to her, and gratifies no one passion of her soul; she would gladly leave this crowd; and we often indulge our imagination in talking, for hours together, of happiness in retired and country scenes, and near you, my dear Charlotte;—for she knows you, she does homage to you; but the homage is not exacted; she loves you, and takes great pleasure in hearing me talk of you.

Oh! why am I not at your feet in your favourite little room, and the dear children

dren playing round us ! If their noise became troublesome to you, I would tell them a story, and they would crowd about me with silent attention. The sun is setting ; his last rays shine on the snow which covers the face of the country ; the storm is over, and I—must return to my dungeon. Adieu !—Is Albert with you, and what is he to you ? Fool that I am ! should I ask this question ?

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## L E T T E R   XLIII.

February 17.

**O**UR minister and I don't seem as if we should continue much longer together : his manner of treating a subject, and of doing business, is so absurd, that I cannot help contradicting him very often, and doing things my own way ; and then, of course, he thinks them very ill done.

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He mentioned something of this kind lately in a letter to court, and I had a reprimand from the minister there—very gentle indeed—but still it was a reprimand; and I had resolved to resign, when I received a private letter, before which I humbled myself, and adored the wise, the noble, the exalted genius which dictated it—which endeavoured to soothe my painful sensibility—expressed an approbation of my schemes, and an opinion of their weight and influence—condescending to inquire into business, as well as to examine the ideas of an impetuous young man. How I am exhorted, not to extinguish this fire, but to soften it, and keep it within due bounds, that it may be productive of good! So now I am no longer at variance with myself, but settled, determined—at least for a week to come. Content and peace of mind are valuable things, my dear friend; but if they are precious, they are also transitory.

LETTER

## LETTER XLIV.

February 20.

**G**OD bless you, my dear friends! and may he grant to you that happiness which he denies to me! I thank you, Albert, for having deceived me.—I waited for the wedding-day to be fixed, and on that day I intended with solemnity to have taken down Charlotte's profile from the wall, and with some other papers to have buried it. You are now united, and her picture still remains there. Well, let it remain. Why should it not? Does not Charlotte find room for me in her heart? Yes, you may allow me to occupy the second place there, and I will, I ought to keep it; I should become furious if she could forget——Albert, that thought is hell.—May you be happy, Albert!—Charlotte, angel of light, may you be the happiest of women!

LETTER

## LETTER XLV.

March 15.

**I** HAVE just had an adventure which will drive me from hence : I lose all patience.—Death !—it is not to be remedied : and you only are the cause of all this ;—you that drove me on, and urged and tormented me ;—you that made me take an employment I am by no means fit for. I have great reason now to be satisfied—so have you ! But, that I may not again be told, that the impetuosity of my temper ruins every thing, I here send you, Sir, a plain and simple narration of the affair, as any mere chronicler of facts would relate it.

The Count of O— likes me, distinguishes me ; it is known that he does ; I have mentioned it to you a hundred times. Yesterday I dined with him ; it was the day on which all the nobility met at his house.

house. I never once dreamed of the assembly, nor that we subalterns were excluded. In short, I dined with the Count, and after dinner we went into the hall, and talked, and walked backwards and forwards.—Colonel B. who came in, joined in the conversation, and the time passed away till the company came. God knows, I was thinking of nothing ! when entered the right noble and right honourable Lady of T—, accompanied by her husband and their silly daughter, with her small waist and flat neck ; with disdainful looks and a haughty air they passed by me. As I hate the whole race, I intended to go away, and was only waiting, till the Count had disengaged himself from their impertinent prate, to take leave, when the agreeable Miss B. came in. As I never see her but with pleasure, I stayed and talked to her, leaning over the back of her chair, and did not perceive till after some time that she seemed a little confused, and did not speak to me with her usual ease of manner.

manner. I was struck with it. "Heavens!" said I to myself, "can she too be like all the rest?" I was angry, and going to withdraw; but the desire of examining farther into this matter kept me. The rest of the company came. I saw the Baron F— enter with the same coat that he wore at the coronation of Francis the first; the Chancellor, and his wife, who is old and deaf; the Count of I—, whose Gothic dress made a still greater contrast to our modern coats, &c. &c. I spoke to those that I knew amongst them; they were all very laconic in their answers. I was taken up with observing Miss B. and did not see that the women were whispering at the end of the room, and that by degrees the same whispering and murmuring got round amongst the men, and that Madame S. was speaking with great warmth to the Count—(this I have since learnt from Miss B.)—At length the Count came up to me, and took me to the window—"You know our ridiculous customs,"



customs," he said; "I perceive the company is rather displeased at your being here: I would not upon any account—"

"I beg your excellency's pardon; I ought to have thought of it before: but I know you will excuse this little inattention. I was going," I added, "some time ago, but my evil genius kept me here;" and smiling, I bowed to take leave. He shook me by the hand in a manner which expressed every thing. I made a bow to the whole illustrious assembly, got into my chaise, and drove to M.—I contemplated the setting sun from the top of the hill.—I read that beautiful passage in Homer, where the honest herdsmen are described receiving the king of Ithaca with so much hospitality; and I returned well pleased. When I went into the supper-room at night, there were but a few persons assembled, and they had turned up a corner of the table-cloth, and were playing at dice. The good-natured Adelin came up to me as soon as I entered, and

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in a low voice said, "You have met with a very disagreeable incident."—"Who, I?"—"The Count obliged you to withdraw from the assembly."—"Devil take the assembly!" said I, "I was very glad to be gone." "I am rejoiced," he said, "that you look upon the affair in that light; all that concerns me is, to find that it is talked of every where already." From that moment I began to think of it in a different manner. All those that looked at me whilst we were at table, I imagined were looking at me on account of this incident, and bitterness entered my heart. And now that I am pitied wherever I go, and hear the triumph of my enemies; who say, "This is always the case with those vain insignificant personages who pretend to despise forms, and want to raise themselves;" with other nonsense of the same kind—I could plunge a dagger into my heart. Say what you will of philosophy and fortitude: one may laugh at nonsense that has no foundation, but how is it possible to endure that

these paltry rascals should have any hold of one?

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## LETTER XLVI.

March 16.

EVERY thing conspires to drive me to extremities. I met Miss B— walking to-day. I could not help joining her, and expressing my sense of her altered manner towards me. “Oh! Werter,” said she, with eagerness, “you who know my heart, how could you so ill interpret my distress? What did I not suffer for you from the first moment I entered the room! I foresaw all that has happened; a hundred times I was upon the point of mentioning it to you. I knew that the S—s and T—s would quit the assembly rather than stay in your company. I knew the Count could not

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break

break with them ; and now all the talk” —I endeavoured to conceal my emotion, and asked her what talk ? “ Oh ! how much it has already cost me !” said the amiable girl, and tears came into her eyes. —I could scarce contain myself—I was ready to throw myself at her feet. “ Explain yourself,” I cried.—Her tears flowed, and I was quite frantic. She wiped them away, without endeavouring to hide them. “ You know my aunt,” she continued ; “ she was present, and, good God ! in what a light does she consider the affair ! Werter, what lessons have I heard last night and this morning upon my connection with you ! I have been obliged to hear you debased and run down ; and I could not, I dared not say much in your defence.”—Every word was a dagger ; she did not know that in pity to me she should have concealed all that she informed me of.—She told me too all the impertinent nonsense that would be circulated upon the occasion, and how the malicious would triumph ;

triumph; how they would rejoice that my pride was humbled; and how happy it would make them to see me punished for that want of esteem for others, with which I had been often reproached. This is what she told me, and in a manner which shewed the warmest interest; this is what I was forced to hear—it awakened all my passions, and I still breathe rage and fury. Would that I could find a man who dared banter me on this event!—I would sacrifice him instantly to my resentment; it would be a relief to me to discharge my fury on the first object I met;—a hundred times have I caught up a sword to give vent to my oppressed heart. There is a noble race of horses, which will instinctively open a vein with their teeth, when they are heated by a long course, in order to breathe more freely—I am often tempted to open a vein, and procure for myself everlasting liberty.



## LETTER XLVII.

March 24.

**I** HAVE written to court for leave to resign; and I hope I shall obtain it. You will forgive me for not having previously consulted you. It was expedient for me to leave this place.—I knew all you could alledge in order to induce me to stay, and therefore—I beg of you to soften this news as much as you can to my mother, when you acquaint her with it. I can do nothing for myself; how should I do any thing for others? She will undoubtedly be grieved to find, that I have stopped short in that career which would have led directly to my being first a Privy Counsellor, and then Minister; and to see me thus returning to my original nothing. Argue on the subject as much as you will, combine all the reasons which should have induced me to stay;

stay ; I am going, that is sufficient. But that you may not be ignorant where I am going, I shall tell you that here is the Prince of ——, who is much pleased with my company, and who having heard of my intention to resign, has invited me to his country house, to pass the spring months with him. He assures me that I shall be left quite at liberty ; and, as we agree on all subjects but one, I shall venture to accompany him.

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## L E T T E R XLVIII.

April 19.

**I** THANK you for your two letters. I waited for my answer from court before I wrote to you. I was under continual apprehension lest my mother should apply to the minister, in order to defeat my purpose. But I have received my dismissal :

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and here it is. I will not tell you with what regret it was given to me, nor what the minister said in his letter to me ; for you would renew your lamentations. The money which I sent to my mother for, I shall not want ; for the hereditary Prince has made me a present—and it was accompanied by a few words which affected me almost to tears.

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## L E T T E R   XLIX.

May 5.

**I** SET out to-morrow ; and as my native place is but six miles out of the great road, I have a mind to see it, and call back to my remembrance the happy dreams of my childhood. I shall go in at the same gate which I came through with my mother, when, after my father's death, she left that delightful retreat to immure herself in

in your melancholy town. Adieu, my dear friend. You shall hear of my expedition.

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## L E T T E R L.

May 9.

I Performed my pilgrimage to the place of my nativity with all the devotion of a real pilgrim: I was affected much beyond what I expected. Near the great elm, which is a quarter of a league from the village on the side of S—, I got out of the carriage, and sent it on before, that alone and on foot I might more fully, and without interruption, enjoy all my recollections. I was then under the same elm which formerly was the term and object of my walks. How things have since changed! Then, in happy ignorance, I languished after a world I did not know,  
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and where I hoped to find all the enjoyments my heart so often felt the want of : and now I was returned from that world so much desired ; and what, my dear friend, did I bring back ? Disappointed hopes, unsuccessful plans.

I observed the opposite mountains, and I remembered how often they had excited my wishes. I used to sit sometimes for whole hours looking at them, and ardently longing to wander under the shade of those woods which make so delightful an object in the distance. With what reluctance I quitted this favourite spot when the play-hour was over, and my leave of absence expired ! As I drew near to the village, I recognised all the little gardens and summer-houses that I was acquainted with. I disliked the new ones, as I do all the alterations that have been made since my time. I went into the village, and felt quite at home again. I cannot, my dear friend, in detail relate all the circumstances with which I was affected ; however



ever interesting they were to me, there would be a sameness in the relation. I had intended to lodge in the market-place, near our old house: as soon as I entered, I perceived that the school-room, where we were taught by that good old woman, was turned into a shop. I remembered the sorrow, the dullness, the anxiety, the oppression of heart I had experienced in that confinement. Every step was marked by some particular impression. A pilgrim in the Holy Land does not meet with so many spots which bring tender recollections to his mind; and scarcely feels more devotion. One sensation I will relate, of the thousand I experienced: Having followed the course of the stream to a farm, which was formerly a favourite walk likewise, and where we used to divert ourselves with making ducks and drakes upon the water, I was most forcibly struck with the memory of what I then was: When I looked at the water as it flowed, and  
formed

formed romantic ideas of the countries it was going to pass through, my imagination was soon exhausted; but the water continued flowing farther and farther, till I was bewildered in the idea of invisible distance. Exactly such, my dear friend, were the thoughts of our good ancestors. And when Ulysses talks of the immeasurable sea, and the unlimited earth, is it not more natural, more true, more according to our feelings, than when, in this philosophic age, every school-boy thinks himself a prodigy, because he can repeat after his master that the earth is round?

I am at present with the Prince at one of his hunting-lodges. He is an honest and unaffected man, and I am very well pleased with him: what I dislike, is his talking of things which he has only read or heard of, and always exactly under the same point of view that they have been presented to him. I am sorry to say, that he values my understanding and talents much more highly than that mind, for which

which alone I value myself—which alone is the source of talents, of happiness, of misery, of every thing—which makes me all I am, and is solely mine.—Any body may know all that I know.

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## L E T T E R   L I.

May 25.

**I** HAD a scheme in my head, which I intended to conceal from you till it was accomplished;—now that it has failed I may as well tell it to you. I had a mind to go into the army; I had long been desirous of it, and it was my chief reason for coming here with the Prince. He is a general in the service of the ——. As we were walking just now, I communicated my design to him: he did not approve it; and it would have been madness not to have yielded to his reasons.

L E T T E R

## LETTER LII.

June 15.

SAY what you please, I can stay in this place no longer. What should I do here? I am weary of it. The Prince, it is true, treats me in all respects as his equal, but still I am not at my ease here. Besides, we are at bottom very different men. He has a good understanding, but quite of the common kind; and the pleasure I have in his conversation, is only such as I receive from reading a well-written book. I shall stay a week more here, and then travel about again. What I have done best, since I came to this place, are some drawings. The prince has some taste for the arts, and would have more, if it was not cramped by cold rules and technical terms. I often lose all patience, when with a glowing imagination I am giving to art and nature the most lively

lively expression, and he stops me with learned criticisms, upon which he highly values himself.

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## LETTER LIII.

June 12.

**W**HERE am I going? I will tell you in confidence: I am obliged to continue here a fortnight longer; after that, I thought it would be expedient for me to see the mines of ——. But 'tis no such thing; I only deceive myself: the real truth is, that I wish to be near Charlotte again. I am not the dupe of my heart, but I obey its dictates.

LETTER



## LETTER LIV.

July 29.

OH! no; 'tis well—'tis all well.—  
Me her husband! Eternal Power  
that gave me being, if thou hadst destin-  
ed such happiness for me, my whole life  
would have been one continual thanksgiv-  
ing! but I will not murmur against thee:  
forgive my tears, forgive my fruitless  
vows!—She might have been mine; I  
might have folded in these arms all that  
is lovely under heaven! — My whole  
frame is convulsed when Albert puts his  
arm round her waist.

Shall I say it?—And why should I not  
say it?—She would have been happier  
with me than with him. Albert was not  
made for her: he wants a certain sen-  
sibility; he wants—in short, their hearts  
do not beat in unison! Ah! my dear  
friend, how often in reading an interest-  
ing passage, when my heart and Char-  
lotte's seemed to meet—and when our  
sentiments

sentiments were unfolded by the story and situation of a fictitious character—how often have I seen and felt, that we were made to understand each other! Alas, my friend!—But this worthy man loves her with all his soul; and what does not such love deserve?

I have been interrupted by an insufferable visit. I have dried up my tears, and my thoughts are a little dissipated. Adieu, my dearest friend.

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## L E T T E R    L V.

August 4.

I AM not alone unfortunate; men are all disappointed in their hopes, and all their schemes fall to the ground. I have been to see the good woman under the lime-trees. The eldest boy ran to meet me; he screamed for joy, and that brought out his mother. She looked very melancholy.

choly. "Alas! my good Sir," said she, "our poor little Jenny is dead; (that was the youngest of her children.) I answered nothing—" And my husband," she continued, "came back from Holland without any money; he was taken ill with a fever; and if some good people had not relieved him, he must have been obliged to beg his bread along the road." I could say nothing to her: I gave some money to the boy; and she offered me some apples, which I accepted, and full of sorrow left the place.

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## LETTER LVI.

August 21.

**M**Y sensations change with the rapidity of lightning. Sometimes a ray of joy seems to give me new life—Alas! it disappears in a moment. When I am thus lost in reveries, I cannot help

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saying

saying to myself—"If Albert was to die, I should be—yes, Charlotte would"—and I pursue the chimera till it leads me to the edge of a precipice, from which I start back and shudder. When I go out at the same gate, when I take the same road which conducted me for the first time towards Charlotte, my heart sinks within me; and I feel with bitterness how different I then was, from what I now am. Yes, all, all is vanished. Not a sentiment, not a pulsation of my heart is the same; no traces of the past remain. If the shade of a departed prince could return to visit the superb palaces he had built in happy times, and left to a beloved son; and if he found them overthrown and destroyed by a more powerful neighbour, such would be his sensations.

## LETTER LVII.

September 3.

**I** Sometimes cannot comprehend how it is that she loves another—how she dares love another, whilst I bear her about me in this heart—whilst she entirely fills and engrosses it—whilst I think only of her, know only her, and have nothing but her in the world.

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## LETTER LVIII.

September 6.

**I**T cost me much to part with the blue frock which I wore the first time I danced with Charlotte; I could not possibly appear in it any longer: but I have made another exactly like it, and with a buff waistcoat and breeches.

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It has not however the same effect upon me. I don't know—but I hope in time it will be as dear to me.

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## L E T T E R L I X.

September 15.

ONE is tempted to wish one's self at the devil, when one thinks of all the contemptible beings which Heaven suffers to crawl upon this earth, without any feeling, without any idea of the things which may be interesting to others. You remember the walnut-trees at S—, under which I sat with Charlotte at the worthy old vicar's. These beautiful, these beloved trees, how they adorned the parsonage-yard their shade was refreshing; it was respectable, for it carried one back with pleasing ideas to the good pastors who planted them. The school-master often mentioned the name of him who planted the oldest of them.

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He had it from his grandfather. This vicar was an excellent man, and under these trees his respectable memory was ever present to me. The school-master had the tears in his eyes yesterday, when he told us they were cut down.—Cut down! I could in my fury murder the ruffian who struck the first stroke!—I that should grieve if I had two such trees in my court, and one died of old age; I must endure this. I have however one consolation—such is sentiment—the whole village murmurs at it, and I hope the good peasants will make no more presents to the vicar's wife, and that she will suffer for the mischief she has done in the parish—for she did it, the wife of the present incumbent (our good old man is dead) a tall, meagre, wrinkled, wan creature, who is so far right to disregard the world, that the world totally disregards her; an antiquated scold, who affects to be learned, pretends to examine the canonical books, lends her assistance towards the new reformation, moral and critical,

critical, of the Christian religion, and shrugs up her shoulders at the mention of Lavater's enthusiasm. Her health is destroyed, and hinders her from having any enjoyment here below. Such a being only could have cut down my walnut-trees. No, I cannot get over it. Would you hear her reasons? The leaves which fell from them made the court wet and dirty; the trees obstructed the light; little boys threw stones at the nuts, and the noise affected her nerves, and disturbed her profound meditations when she was weighing in the balance Kennicott, Semler, and Michaelis. When I found that all the parish was displeased, and particularly the old people, I asked them why they suffered it?—"Ah! Sir," they said, "when the steward orders, what can we poor peasants do?" However one thing has happened very well; the steward and the vicar (who for once thought to reap some advantage from the caprices of his wife) intended to divide the trees between

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them,

them. The revenue-office being informed of it, took possession of the trees, and sold them to the best bidder. There they still lie on the ground. Oh ! if I was a sovereign prince, how I would deal with the vicar, the steward, and the revenue-office !— But if I was a prince, what should I care for the trees that grew in my country ?

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## L E T T E R   L X.

October 10.

**O**NLY to look at her dark eyes, is to me happiness. What grieves me is, that Albert does not seem so happy as he expected to be—as I should have been—if—I don't much love suspensions ; but here I cannot express myself any other-wise.—Heavens ! and am I not explicit enough ?

L E T T E R

## LETTER LXI.

October 12.

OSSIAN has taken the place of Homer in my heart and imagination. To what a world does the illustrious bard carry me! To wander in heaths and wilds, surrounded by impetuous whirlwinds, in which, by the feeble light of the moon, we discover the spirits of our ancestors;—to hear from the top of the mountains, amidst the roaring of the waters, their plaintive sounds issuing from deep caverns, and the sorrowful lamentations of a maiden who sighs and dies on the mossy tomb of the warrior by whom she was adored! I meet this bard with silver hair; he wanders in the valley, he seeks the footsteps of his fathers. Alas! he finds only their tombs! Then contemplating the pale moon as she sinks beneath the waves of the foaming sea, the memory of  
of



of time past strikes the mind of the hero;—those times when the approach of danger filled his heart with exultation, and gave vigour to his nerves—when the moon shone upon his bark, laden with the spoils of his enemies, and lighted up his triumph—when I read in his countenance his deep sorrow—when I see his sinking glory tottering towards the grave—when he casts a look on the cold earth which is to cover him, and cries out, “The traveller will come, he will come who has seen my beauty, and he will ask, where is the bard, where is the illustrious son of Fingal? he will walk over my tomb, and he will seek me in vain!”—Then, O my friend! I could instantly, like a true and noble knight, draw my sword, and rescue my prince from long and painful languor, and afterwards plunge it into my own breast, to follow the demi-god whom my hand set free.

LETTER

## LETTER LXII.

October 19.

**A**LAS! the void, the fearful void I feel in my bosom — Sometimes I think, if I could but once, only once press her to my heart, I should be happy.

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## LETTER LXIII.

26th October.

**I**AM convinced, my dear friend, more and more convinced, that the existence of any one being whatever is of little, very little consequence. A friend of Charlotte's came just now to make her a visit: I withdrew, and took up a book in the next room; but I could not read, and therefore I write to you. I hear their conversation:

sation : they are only talking of the news of the town ; one is going to be married, another is ill, very ill. “ She has a dry cough, and frequent faintings ; she cannot recover,” says one. “ N. is very ill too,” says Charlotte. “ He begins to swell already,” answers the other : And my imagination suddenly carries me to their sick beds : I see them struggling against approaching death, in all the agonies of pain and horror. I see them—And these good little women are talking of it with the same indifference that one would mention the death of a stranger.—And when I look at the apartment in which I now am, when I see Charlotte’s apparel lying round me ; here upon this little table are her ear-rings, Albert’s papers, all the things which are so familiar to me, the very ink-stand I now use ; and that I think what I am to this family—every thing—my friends esteem me, are made happy by me, and my heart cannot conceive that I could exist without them ; and yet

yet if I was now to go, if I was to quit this circle, would they feel, how long would they feel that void in their life, which the loss of me would leave? How long—yes, such is the frailty of man, that there where he most feels his own existence, where his presence makes a real and a strong impression, even in the memory of those who are dear to him; there also he must perish and vanish away, and that so quickly!

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## L E T T E R    L X I V .

October 27.

**I** COULD tear open my bosom, I could beat my head against the wall, when I see how difficult it is to communicate our ideas, our sensations to others; to make them enter intirely into our feelings. I cannot receive from another the love,  
the

the joy, the warmth, the pleasure, that I do not naturally possess ; nor with a heart glowing with the most lively affection, can I make the happiness of one in whom the same warmth and energy are not inherent.

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## L E T T E R    L X V .

October 30.

**A** Hundred times have I been upon the point of catching her in my arms ! What torment it is to see such loveliness, such charms, passing and re-passing continually before one, and not dare to touch them ! To touch is so natural : Do not children touch every thing that they see ? and I !—

L E T T E R



## LETTER LXVI.

November 3.

**H**OW often, when I have lain down in my bed, have I wished never to wake again ! and in the morning I open my eyes, I again behold the sun, and I am wretched. Oh ! why am I not fanciful and hypochondriacal ? Why cannot I attribute my woes to intemperate seasons, to disappointed ambition, to the persecutions of an enemy ? for then this insupportable load of discontent would not rest wholly upon myself. But, wretched that I am ! I feel it but too sensibly, I alone am the cause of my unhappiness ; this same bosom, which formerly contained a source of delight, is now the source of all my torments. Am I not the same man who formerly felt only agreeable sensations ? who, every step he took, saw paradise before him, and whose heart was expanded,

panded, and full of benevolence to the whole world. But this heart is now dead, dead to all sentiment : my eyes are dry, and my senses, no longer refreshed by soft tears, wither away, and perish, and consume my brain. My sufferings are great : I have lost the only charm of my life ; that active sacred power, which created worlds around me ; it is no more. From my window I see the distant hills ; the rising sun breaks through the mists, opens wide the prospect, and illuminates the country. I see the soft stream gently winding through the willows, stripped of their leaves. Nature displays all her beauties before me, exhibits the most enchanting scenes, and my heart is unmoved ; I remain blind, insensible, petrified. Often have I implored Heaven for tears, as the labourer prays for dews to moisten the parched corn.

But, I feel it, God does not grant sunshine or rain to importunate entreaties. Those times, the memory of which now  
torments

torments me, why were they so fortunate? It was because I then waited for the blessings of the Eternal with patience, and received them with a grateful and feeling heart.

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## L E T T E R    L X V I I .

November 8.

C H A R L O T T E has reproved me for my excesses, with so much tenderness and goodness!—In order to forget myself, my dear friend, I have for some time past drank more wine than usual—“Don’t do it,” said she; “think of Charlotte.”—The necessary advice to think of Charlotte!—“I do think of you, and yet ’tis not *thinking* of you; you are always before my eyes, you are in my heart: This very morning I was sitting in the place where you stopped the last time—” Immediately she changed

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the subject. My dear friend, I am no longer any thing, she makes me just what she pleases.

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## L E T T E R    L X V I I I .

November 15.

**I** THANK you, my good friend, for interesting yourself so kindly in what relates to me, and for the good advice you give me ; and I beg of you to make yourself easy. Leave me to my sufferings ; surrounded as I am, I have still strength enough to endure them to the end. I revere our religion ; you know I do : I am sensible that it often gives strength to the feeble, and comfort to the afflicted.—But has it, should it have this effect on all men equally ? Consider this vast universe, and you will find millions for whom it never has existed ; and millions, whether it is preached to them or  
not,

not, for whom it never will exist.—Do not give a wrong construction to this, I beg of you. I don't love vain disputes on subjects which we are all equally ignorant of. What is the destiny of man?—to fill up the measure of his sufferings, and drink up the bitter draught.—And if the cup appeared bitter even to the Son of the Most High, why should I affect a foolish pride, and say my cup is sweet? Why should I be ashamed to tremble in that fearful moment, when my soul shall be suspended between existence and annihilation—when dissolution, like a flash of lightning, shall illuminate the dark gulph of futurity—when every thing shakes around me, and the whole world vanishes away?—This is the voice of a creature oppressed beyond all resource, and who feels with terror that he cannot escape destruction—"My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"—Should I be ashamed to use this expression? He who spreads out the heavens as it were a garment, felt terror himself.

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LETTER



## L E T T E R   L X I X .

November 20.

C H A R L O T T E does not know, does not feel, that she is preparing for me a poison which will destroy us both; and this deadly poison which she presents to me I swallow in large draughts. What mean those looks of kindness which she sometimes bestows upon me, that complacency with which she hears the sentiments that sometimes escape me, and the tender pity which appears in her countenance? Yesterday when I took leave of her, she held out her hand to me, and said, "Adieu, my dear Werter." — *Dear Werter!* — It was the first time she ever called me dear; the sound sunk deep into my heart: I have repeated it a hundred times since; and when I went to bed, I said, "Good night, my dear Werter." — I recollected myself, and laughed.

L E T T E R

## LETTER LXX.

November 24.

CHARLOTTE is sensible of my sufferings. I found her alone, and was silent: she looked stedfastly at me; the fire of genius, the charms of beauty were fled. But I saw in her countenance an expression much more touching;—the expression of soft pity, and the tenderest concern.—Why was I withheld from throwing myself at her feet? Why did I not dare to take her in my arms, and answer her by a thousand kisses?—She had recourse to her harpsicord, and in a low and sweet voice accompanied it with melodious sounds. Her lips never appeared so lovely; they seemed but just to open to receive the notes of the instrument, and return half the vibration.—But who could express such sensations! I was soon overcome, and, bending down, I pronounced this vow: “Beautiful lips, which celest-

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tial

tial spirits guard, never will I seek to profane you." And yet I wish—oh! my friend, 'tis like drawing a curtain before my heart—only to taste this felicity, and die and expiate my crimes.—My crimes!

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## L E T T E R LXXI.

November 30.

**I**T is all over; I see it, my fate is decided. Every thing encreases my woes; every thing points out my destiny. To-day again—

I went to walk by the river-side, about dinner-time, for I could not eat. The country was gloomy and deserted; a cold and damp easterly wind blew from the mountains, and black heavy clouds spread over the plain. I perceived a man at a distance in an old great coat; he was wandering amongst the rocks, and seemed to be looking for plants. When I came up to  
to

to him, he turned about, and I saw an interesting countenance, with all the marks of a settled melancholy; his fine black hair was flowing on his shoulders. "What are you looking for, friend?" said I. He answered, with a deep sigh, "I am looking for flowers, and I can't find any." "But this is not the season for flowers," said I. "There are so many flowers," he said, "I have in my garden, roses, and honey-suckles of two sorts, one of them I had from my father; they grow every where: I have been two whole days looking for them, and I can't find them. There are flowers too above there, yellow, and blue, and red, and that centaury which grows in such pretty clusters; I can find none of them." I asked him what he intended to do with these flowers. He smiled, and holding up his finger with a mysterious air, said, "Don't betray me, I have promised my mistress a nosegay." "You did well," said I. "Oh! she has every thing," he answered, "she is very  
M 4 rich:"

rich.”—“ And yet,” said I, “ she likes your nosegays ?” “ Oh ! she has jewels and a crown !” he exclaimed. I asked who she was. “ If the States General would but pay me,” he cried out, “ I should be quite another man ! Alas ! there was a time when I was so happy ; but that time is past, and I am now—” He raised his swimming eyes to heaven.—“ You were then happy !” I said. “ Alas ! why am I not still the same ?” said he ; “ I was so well, so gay, so contented—I was like a fish in the water.” An old woman who was coming towards us, called out, “ Henry, Henry ! where are you ? we have been looking every where for you ; come to dinner !” “ Is that your son ?” I ask’d her. “ Yes, my poor unfortunate son,” said she ; “ the Lord has sent us this affliction.” I asked whether he had been long in that state. “ It is about six months,” she answered, “ since he has been calm as he is now, and I thank Heaven for it ; he was one whole year quite



quite raving, and chained down in a mad-house; now he does no harm to any body, but he talks of nothing but kings and emperors. He was a very good young man, and helped to maintain me; he wrote a very fine hand: and all of a sudden he became melancholy, was seized with a burning fever, grew distracted, and is now as you see. If I was to tell you, Sir——” —I interrupted her by asking at what time it was that he boasted of having been so happy. “Poor boy,” said she, with a smile of compassion, “it is the time in which he was entirely out of his senses; he never ceases to regret it: it is the time when he was confined and absolutely raving.” I was thunderstruck. I put some money into his hand, and went away.

“You were happy!” I exclaimed, as I walked hastily back towards the town; “you were like a fish in the water!” God of heaven! is this the destiny of man? is he only happy before he possesses his reason, and after he has lost it? You are unfortunate,

fortunate, and I envy your lot : Full of hopes you go to gather flowers for your princess—in winter !—and are grieved not to find any, and don't know why they cannot be found. — But as for me, I wander without hope, without design, and I return as I came. To your disordered fancy it appears that if the States General paid you, you should be a man of consequence ; and happy it is for you that you can attribute your sufferings to any foreign power. You do not know, you do not feel that your wretchedness is in your agitated heart, in your disordered brain, and that all the kings and potentates on earth cannot restore you.

Let their death be without consolation, who can laugh at the sick man that travels to distant springs, only to find an accumulation of disease, and a death more painful ! or that can exult over the depressed mind, who to obtain peace of conscience, to alleviate his miseries, makes a pilgrimage to the Holy Land ! Every step which  
wings

wrings his feet in unbeaten paths, is a drop of balm to his soul, and each night brings new relief to his heart.—Will you dare to call this extravagance, you that raise yourselves upon stilts to make pompous declamations?—Extravagance!—O God, thou seest my tears! thou hast given unto us a sufficient portion of misery, must we also have brethren that persecute us, that would deprive us of all consolation, and take away our trust in thee, in thy love and mercy? The vine which strengthens us, the root which heals us, come from thy hand—Relief and saving health are thine. Father! whom I know not!—thou who wert wont to fill my soul, but now hidest thy face from me!—call me back, speak to my heart!—in vain thy silence would delay a soul which thirsts after thee!—What father would be wrathful against his son, if he appeared suddenly before him, and fell on his neck, and cried out, “Oh, my father! forgive me if I have shortened my journey, if I am returned before

before the appointed time!—The world is every where the same—labour and pain, pleasure and reward, all were alike indifferent to me—I find happiness only in thy presence, and here let me remain whatever is my fate!—And wouldst thou, heavenly and adored Father, banish this child from thy awful presence?

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## L E T T E R LXXII.

December 1.

**M**Y dear friend, the man I described to you, the man so enviable in his misfortunes, was secretary to Charlotte's father. He conceived an unhappy passion for her; he cherished, concealed, and at length discovered it—was dismissed, and became such as I yesterday saw him.—Think what an impression these few words made upon me! which Albert repeated with as much tranquillity, as perhaps you read them.

## LETTER LXXIII.

December 4.

**I**T is all over, my dear friend; I can support this state no longer. To-day I was sitting by Charlotte; she was playing on her harpsicord, with an expression it is impossible for me to describe to you. Her little sister was dressing her doll upon my lap; the tears came into my eyes; I leaned down and looked intently at her wedding-ring; my tears fell—immediately she began to play the favourite, the divine air which has so often enchanted me.—I felt comforted by it; but soon it recalled to my mind the times that are past—Grief! disappointed hopes!—I began to walk with hasty strides about the room—I was choaked—At length I went up to her, and with eagerness said, “For heaven’s sake, play that no longer.” She stopped, looked steadfastly at me, and said, with a smile that sunk deep



deep into my heart, "Werter, you are indeed very ill: your most favourite food disgusts you. Pray go, and try to compose yourself."—I tore myself from her.—Great God! thou see'st my torments, and thou wilt put an end to them!

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## LETTER LXXIV.

December 6.

**H**OW her image haunts me! Awake or asleep she is ever present to my soul!—Soon as I close my eyes, here in this brain, where all my nerves are centred, her dark eyes are imprinted. Here—I don't know how to describe it:—but if I shut my eyes, hers are immediately before me like a sea, like a precipice, and they occupy all the fibres of my head.—What is man! that boasted demigod! his strength fails him when most he  
wants

wants it ;—and whether he swims in pleasure, or bends under a load of sorrow, he is forced to stop ; and whilst he is grasping at infinity, finds he must return again to his first cold existence.

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## LETTER LXXV.

December 8.

**I** FEEL, as those wretches must have felt who were formerly supposed to be possessed by devils. Sometimes I am seized with strange starts and motions ;—it is not agony, it is not passion, it is an interior secret rage which tears my bosom, and seems to seize my throat—Wretch that I am !—Then I run, and wander amidst the dark and gloomy scenes which this unfriendly season exhibits. Last night I felt thus constrained to go out of the town. I had been told that the river, and all the brooks in the neighbourhood, had over-  
5 flown

flown their banks, and that my favourite valley was under water. I ran thither at past eleven o'clock : it was a gloomy and awful sight ! the moon was behind a cloud, but by means of a few scattered rays I could perceive the foaming waves rolling over the fields and meadows, and beating against the bushes ; the whole valley was as a stormy sea, tossed by furious winds. The moon then appeared again, and rested on a dark cloud ; the splendor of her light increased the disorder of nature. The echoes repeated and redoubled the roarings of the wind and the waters. I drew near to the precipice ; I wished and shuddered ; I stretched out my arms, I leaned over, I sighed, and lost myself in the happy thought of burying all my sufferings, all my torments, in that abyss, and tossing amidst the waves. Why were my feet rooted to the earth ? why could I not thus have put an end to my misery ? —But I feel it, my dear friend, my hour is not yet come. With what delight should

should I have changed my nature, and have incorporated with the whirlwinds to rend the clouds and disturb the waters ! Perhaps I may one day quit my prison, and taste these pleasures.

I looked sorrowfully down upon a little spot where I had sat under a willow by the side of Charlotte, after a summer's walk ; that also was under water. I could hardly distinguish the tree. Alas ! I then thought of the meadows, the fields round the hunting-lodge ; the walks, the green recesses, now perhaps laid waste by the torrent ; and the memory of time for ever lost entered my heart.—Thus, to the sleeping captive, dreams recall all the blessings he is deprived of.—I stopped.—I don't reproach myself, I have the courage to die ;—I should have.—I am now like an old and wretched woman, who picks dry sticks along the hedge side, and begs bread from door to door, to prolong for a few moments her feeble and miserable existence.

N L E T T E R

## - L E T T E R LXXVI.

December 17.

**I** KNOW not how it is, my dear friend, my imagination is full of terror! Is not my love for her the purest and the most sacred? Is it not the love of a brother for his sister? Did ever my heart form a wish that was criminal?—I will make no vows.—And now a dream—Oh! they were much in the right who attributed contending passions to powers that are foreign to us!—This very night—I tremble as I write it—this very night I held her in my arms, I pressed her to my bosom, devoured her trembling lips with kisses. The most melting softness was in her eyes, in mine equal extasy.—When I now at this moment recall these transports with delight, am I guilty of a crime?—Oh! Charlotte! Charlotte! 'tis all over;—my senses are disordered, and for these seven days I have



not been myself ;—my eyes are full of tears ;—all places are alike to me ; in none am I at peace ;—I desire nothing, I ask nothing.—Ah ! 'twere better far that I should depart !

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*[The Editor to the Reader.]*

**I**N order to give a connected account of the last days of Werter, I am obliged to interrupt the course of his letters by a narration ; the materials for which were furnished to me by Charlotte, Albert, his own servant, and some other witnesses.

THE passion of Werter had insensibly diminished the harmony which subsisted between Charlotte and her husband. The affection of Albert for his wife was sincere, but calm, and had by degrees given place to his business. He did not indeed own, even to himself, that there was this difference between the days of courtship

and the days of marriage ; but he felt a certain displeasure at the marked attentions of Werter. It was an infringement of his right, and a kind of tacit reproof. This idea increased the dissatisfaction he felt from business that was continually accumulating, that was full of difficulties, and for which he was but indifferently paid. The grief which preyed on Werter's heart had exhausted the strength of his genius ; he had lost his vivacity and his quick perceptions ; in society he appeared joyless and flat. This disposition had of course an influence upon Charlotte, who saw him every day ; and she fell into a sort of melancholy, which Albert attributed to the progress of her attachment to her lover, and Werter to the deep concern she felt for the alteration in Albert's conduct towards her. The want of confidence in these two friends made their society irksome to each other. Albert avoided going to his wife's apartment when Werter was there ; and Werter,

ter, who perceived it, after some fruitless efforts to desist, took those opportunities to see her, when he knew Albert was engaged. Discontent and bitterness of heart increased, till at length Albert very drily told his wife, that, were it for the sake of appearance only, she should behave differently to Werter, and not see him so often. About the same time, this unfortunate young man was confirmed in his resolution to quit this world. It had long been his most favourite thought, and particularly since his return to the neighbourhood of Charlotte. He had always encouraged it, but he would not commit such an action with precipitation and rashness ; he was determined to take this step like a man who knows what he is doing, is resolved and firm, but calm and tranquil. His doubts and struggles may be seen by the following fragment, which was found, without any date, amongst his papers, and which appears to have been the beginning of a letter to his friend.]

—HER presence, her fate, the interest she shews for mine, have power still to draw some tears from my withered brain !

One lifts up the curtain ; one passes to the other side—that is all !—And why all these delays ? why all these fears ?—Because we know not what is behind—because there is no returning—and we suppose that all is darkness and confusion, where there is uncertainty.

[HIS mortification, when he was secretary to the ambassador, was never effaced from his memory. Whenever he mentioned it, which did not often happen, it was easy to perceive that he thought his honour irrecoverably wounded by that adventure ; and it gave him a distaste for public affairs, and all political business. He then gave way entirely to those singular opinions and sentiments which are to be met with in these letters ; and to a passion which knew no bounds, and which

was

was destined to consume all his remaining vigour. The continual sameness and fadness of his intercourse with the most amiable and most beloved of women, whose peace he disturbed—his conflicts and struggles—and the seeing his life pass away without end or design, drove him at length to put an end to his existence.]

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## LETTER LXXVII.

December 20.

**I** MUST depart!—I thank you for having repeated the word so seasonably.—Yes, it is undoubtedly better that I should depart. However, I do not entirely approve the scheme of returning to your neighbourhood: at least I should like to make a tour in my way; particularly as one may expect a frost, and consequently good roads. I am much pleased with your intention of coming to fetch

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me;



me ; I only desire you to defer your journey for a fortnight, and to wait for another letter from me. One should gather nothing before it is ripe, and a fortnight sooner or later makes a great difference. Desire my mother to think of me in her prayers ; and tell her I sincerely ask her pardon for all the unhappiness I have occasioned her. I was doomed to give sorrow to all those whose happiness I ought to have promoted. Adieu ! my dear, my dearest friend ! May all the blessings of Heaven attend you ! Adieu !

[THE same day (which was the Sunday before Christmas) Werter went in the evening to Charlotte's house, and found her alone. She was busy preparing little gifts for her brothers and sisters, which were to be distributed on Christmas-eve. He began talking of the delight of the children, and of that age when the opening of the door, and the sudden appearance of the dessert decorated with fruit and sweetmeats, and  
lighted

lighted up with wax candles, causes such transports of joy—"You shall have a gift too, if you behave well," said Charlotte, hiding her embarrassment under a sweet smile. "What do you call behaving well," said he, "my dear Charlotte?" She answered, "Thursday night is Christmas-eve: the children are all to be here, and my father too; there is a present for each; do you come likewise—but do not come before that time."—Werter was struck—"I desire you will not; it must be so; I ask it of you as a favour; it is for my own peace and tranquillity that I ask it; we must not go on in this manner any longer."—He turned away his face, walked hastily up and down the room, and muttered between his teeth, "We must not go on in this manner any longer." Charlotte seeing the violent agitation into which these words had thrown him, endeavoured to divert his thoughts by different questions. But it was in vain. "No, Charlotte," said he, "I will

will never see you more !” “ And why so, Werter ? we may, we must see one another again, only let it be with more discretion. Oh ! why were you born with that impetuosity—with that excessive, that ungovernable passion for every thing that is dear to you ?” Then, taking his hand, she said, “ Let me beg of you to be more calm ; what a variety of pleasure and entertainment your fine understanding, your genius and talents may furnish you !—Be yourself, and get the better of an unfortunate attachment to me, who can only pity you.”—He bit his lips, and looked at her with a dark and angry countenance. She continued to hold his hand—“ Grant me a moment’s patience, Werter !—Do you not see that you are deceiving yourself, that you are seeking your own destruction ? Why must it be only me—me who belong to another ?—I fear, I much fear, that the impossibility only of possessing me makes the desire of it so strong.” He  
drew

drew back his hand, and with wild and angry looks fixed his eyes on her—" 'Tis well!" he exclaimed, "'tis very well!—Did not Albert furnish you with this reflection—'tis a very profound one." "It is a reflection that any one might very easily make," she answered: "What! is there not in the whole world one woman, who is at liberty, and who has the power to make you happy? Get the better of yourself; look for such a woman, and believe me when I tell you that you will certainly find her. I have long apprehended for you, and for us all, the small circle to which you have confined yourself.—Make an effort; a journey may and will dissipate you.—Seek and find an object worthy your tenderness; then return here, and enjoy with us all the happiness that can arise from the most perfect friendship."

"This speech, my dear Charlotte," said Werter, with a smile, but full of acrimony, "ought to be printed for the improvement

improvement of all teachers. Allow me but a little time longer, and all will be well.”—“ But however, Werter, don’t come again before Christmas-eve,” she said.—He was going to answer, when Albert came in.—Werter and he coolly saluted each other, and with apparent embarrassment walked up and down the room. They began to converse on different subjects, but without connection, and they were soon dropped. Albert asked his wife about some commissions he had given her; and finding they were not executed, he made use of some harsh expressions, which pierced the heart of Werter. He wished to go, but had not power to move; and in this situation he remained till eight o’clock; uneasiness of temper and acrimony continually increasing; till at length the cloth was laid, and he took leave, whilst Albert very coldly asked him, if he would not stay supper.

Werter returned home, took the candle from his servant, and went up to his room alone.



alone. He was heard talking with great earnestness, and walking hastily in his room in a passion of tears. At length, without undressing, he threw himself on the bed ; where his servant found him at eleven o'clock, when he ventured to go in and take off his boots. Werter did not prevent him, but ordered him not to come in the morning till he rung.

Monday morning, the 21st of December, he wrote the following letter, which was found sealed on his bureau after his death, and given to Charlotte. I shall insert it in fragments, as it appears by several circumstances to have been written.]

—IT is all over.—Charlotte, I am resolved to die ; I tell it you deliberately and coolly, without any romantic passion, the morning of that day on which I am to see you for the last time. At the very moment when you read these lines, Oh ! best of women ! a cold grave holds the  
inanimate

inanimate remains of that agitated unhappy man, who in the last moments of his life knew no pleasure so great as that of conversing with you. I have passed a dreadful night—or rather let me call it a propitious one; for it has determined me, it has fixed my purpose; I am resolved to die. When I tore myself from you yesterday, my senses were in the greatest tumult and disorder; my heart was oppressed; hope and every ray of pleasure were fled for ever from me; and a petrifying cold seemed to surround my wretched being.—I could scarcely reach my room;—I threw myself on my knees.—Heaven for the last time granted me the consolation of shedding tears. My troubled soul was agitated by a thousand ideas, a thousand different schemes! at length one thought took possession of me, and is now fixed in my heart—I will die.—It is not despair, it is conviction that I have filled up the measure of my sufferings, that I have reached the term, and that I sacrifice

fice myself for you. Yes, Charlotte, why should I not say it? It is necessary for one of us three to depart—it shall be Werter. —Oh! my dear Charlotte! this heart, governed by rage and fury, has often conceived the horrid idea of murdering your husband—you—myself!—I must then depart.—When in the fine evenings of summer, you walk towards the mountains, think of me; recollect the times you have so often seen me come up from the valley; raise your eyes to the church-yard which contains my grave; and by the light of the departing sun, see how the evening breeze waves the high grass which grows over me!—I was calm when I began my letter; but the recollection of these scenes makes me cry like a child.

[ABOUT ten in the morning, Werter called his servant; and as he was dressing, told him he should go in a few days, bid him lay his cloaths in order, call in his bills, fetch home the books he had

had lent, and give two months pay to those poor people who were used to receive a weekly allowance from him. He breakfasted in his room; and then mounted his horse, and went to make a visit to the steward, who was not at home. He walked pensively in the garden, and seemed as if he wished to renew all the ideas that were most painful to him. The children did not suffer him to remain long alone; they all went in pursuit of him, and skipping and dancing round him, told him, that after to-morrow, and to-morrow, and one day more, they were to have their Christmas-gift from Charlotte; and described to him all the wonderful things their little imaginations had formed an expectation of. "To-morrow," said he, "and to-morrow, and one day more!"—and he kissed them tenderly. He was going, but the little one stopped him, to whisper in his ear, that his brothers had wrote fine compliments upon the new-year—very fine indeed, and very long,—  
one

one for papa, and one for Albert and Charlotte, and one for Mr. Werter too; and that they were to be presented very early in the morning on new-year's day.—

This last stroke quite overcame him—He gave something to each of the children, got upon his horse, and charging them to give his compliments to their papa, left them with tears in his eyes. He returned home about five o'clock, and ordered his seryant to keep up the fire; told him to pack up his books and linen at the bottom of the trunk, and to lay his coats at the top.—He then appears to have wrote the following fragment of his letter to Charlotte.]

—YOU do not expect me;—you think I shall obey you, and that I shall not see you again till Christmas-eve. Oh! Charlotte, to-day or never! On Christmas-eve you will hold in your hand this paper; you will tremble, and you will wet it with  
O your



your tears.—I ought—I will—I am well pleased that I have fixed my resolution.

[AT half an hour after six he went to Albert's; he found only Charlotte at home, who was much distressed at seeing him. She had, in conversation with her husband, mentioned, with seeming negligence, that Werter would not come there again till Christmas-eve; and very soon afterwards Albert ordered his horse, and, notwithstanding the rain, set out in order to settle some business with a steward in the neighbourhood. Charlotte knew that he had for a long time delayed making this visit, which was to keep him a night from home. She felt his want of confidence, and was hurt. Alone, and full of sorrow, she recalled her past life, and found no cause of reproach either in her sentiments or her conduct, or with regard to her husband, from whom she had a right to expect happiness, and who was now the cause of her misery. She then thought of

Werter, and blamed, but could not hate him. A secret sympathy had attached her to him from their first acquaintance; and now, after so long an intimacy, after passing through so many different scenes, the impression was engraved on her mind for ever. At length her full heart was relieved by tears, and she fell into a soft melancholy, in which she was quite wrapt and lost; when with infinite astonishment and emotion she heard Werter upon the stairs, asking if she was at home? It was too late to deny herself, and she had not recovered her confusion when he came in. “You have not kept your word,” she cried out.—“I did not promise any thing,” he answered.—“But for both our sakes,” said Charlotte, “you should have granted what I asked of you.”—She sent to some of her friends, and desired them to come, that they might be witnesses of the conversation; with the idea too, that Werter, thinking himself obliged to wait upon them home, would go away the sooner.

He had brought some books ; she talked to him of them, and of some others, and introduced various indifferent subjects whilst she was expecting her friends ; but the servant brought back their excuses—one was engaged with company, and another prevented by the rain.

This unlucky circumstance at first made Charlotte uneasy, but the consciousness of her own innocence at length inspired her with a noble confidence : and, above the chimeras of Albert's brain, and conscious of her own purity of heart, she rejected her first intention of calling in her maid ; and after playing two or three minutes on the harpsicord to recover herself, she went with great composure, and sat down by Werter on the sofa. " Have you nothing to read to me ?" she said.—He answered, " No."—" Open that drawer," said Charlotte, " and you will find your own translation of some of the songs of Ossian ; I have not yet read it ; I have been waiting till you could read it to me yourself, but  
for

for some time past you have been good for nothing.”—He smiled, went to fetch the manuscript, and shuddered as he took it up.—He sat down with eyes swimming in tears, and began to read.—After reading for some time, he came to that affecting passage, where Armin deplotes the loss of his beloved daughter.

“Alone on the sea-beat rock my daughter was heard to complain. Frequent and loud were her cries; nor could her father relieve her. All night I stood on the shore. I saw her by the faint beam of the moon. All night I heard her cries. Loud was the wind, and the rain beat hard on the side of the mountain. Before morning appeared, her voice was weak; it died away like the evening breeze among the grass of the rocks. Spent with grief, she expired; and left thee, Armin, alone! Gone is my strength in the war; and fallen my pride among women!

“When the storms of the mountain come, when the north lifts the waves on

high, I sit by the sounding shore, and look on the fatal rock. Often by the setting moon I see the ghosts of my children. Half viewless they walk in mournful conference together. Will none of you speak in pity? They do not regard their father! I am sad, O Carmor! nor small my cause of woe!"

A flood of tears streamed from the eyes of Charlotte, and gave some relief to the oppression of heart which she felt. Werter threw down the paper, seized her hand, and wept over it. She leaned on the other arm, and held her handkerchief to her eyes. They were both of them in the utmost agitation. In this unhappy story they felt their own misfortunes; together they felt them, and their tears flowed from the same source. The ardent eyes and lips of Werter were rivetted to her arm. She trembled, and wished to go from him; but sorrow and soft compassion pressed upon her, and weighed her down. At length she heaved a deep sigh to recover herself,



herself, and sobbing, desired him to go on. Werter, quite exhausted, took up the manuscript, and in broken accents continued—

“Why dost thou awake me, O gale? It seems to say, I am covered with the drops of heaven. The time of my fading is near, and the blast that shall scatter my leaves. To-morrow shall the traveller come : he that saw me in my beauty shall come ; his eyes will search the field, but they will not find me.”

The whole force of these words fell like a stroke of thunder on the heart of the unfortunate Werter. In his despair he threw himself at Charlotte's feet, seized her hands, and put them to his eyes and to his forehead. An apprehension of his fatal project for the first time struck her : her senses were bewildered ; she pressed his hands, pressed them to her bosom, and leaning towards him, with emotions of tender pity, her warm cheek touched his.

O 4

Then

Then they lost sight of every thing; the whole world disappeared from before their eyes. He clasped her in his arms, strained her to his bosom, and covered her trembling lips with passionate kisses. "Werter!" she cried, in a faint voice, and turned her face from him; "Werter!" and with a feeble hand put him from her. At length, with the firm, determined voice of virtue, she cried, "Werter!" and he was awed by it; and tearing himself from her arms, fell on his knees before her. Charlotte rose, and with disordered grief, and in a voice of love mixed with resentment, said, "This is the last time; Werter, you will never see me more!" She cast one last tender look upon her unfortunate lover, then ran into her room, and bolted the door. Werter held out his arms to her, but did not dare to detain her. He continued on the ground with his head resting on the sofa for above half an hour, till he heard a noise;—it was the servant coming to lay the cloth. He then walked up and  
down

down the room ; and when he was again left alone, he went to Charlotte's door, and in a low voice said, " Charlotte! Charlotte! but one word more, only one adieu." He stopped, and listened. She made no answer.—He entreated—listened again ; then tore himself from the place, crying, " Adieu, Charlotte! Adieu, for ever!"

Werter ran to the gate of the town; the guard knew him, and let him pass. The night was dark and stormy ; it rained and snowed. He came in about eleven. His servant perceived he was without a hat, but did not venture to say any thing; and when he undressed his master, he found his cloaths were all wet. His hat was afterwards found upon the point of a rock, where it is inconceivable that he could climb in such a night, without breaking his neck. He went to bed, and slept till late next day. His servant found him writing when he carried his coffee to him.

He

He was adding what follows to Charlotte's letter.]

—FOR the last, last time, I now open my eyes. Alas! they will behold the sun no more; a thick and gloomy fog hides it.—Yes! let Nature put on mourning—your child, your friend, your lover, draws near his end. Charlotte! the sentiment I now feel, stands alone in my mind—it is strongly marked; and yet nothing appears to me more like a dream, than when I say, This is the last day. The last! Charlotte, I have no idea that corresponds with this word—Last!—To-day I stand upright, I have all my strength; to-morrow, cold and stiff, I shall lie extended on the ground. What is death? we do but dream when we talk of it.—I have seen many die;—but such are the limits of our feeble nature, we have no clear conceptions of the beginning or end of our existence. At this moment I still possess myself—or rather, dearest of women! I  
am

am thine ;—and the next—detached, separated—perhaps for ever !—No, Charlotte, no ! we now exist, how can we be annihilated !—What is annihilation ?—this too is a mere word, a sound which conveys no idea to my mind !—Dead ! Charlotte ! shut up in a pit, so deep, so cold, so dark.—I had a friend who was every thing to me in my helpless youth ; she died : I followed her hearse, I stood by the side of her grave when the coffin was let down ; when I heard the creaking of the cords as they were let down and drawn up, when the first shovelful of earth was thrown in, and the coffin returned a hollow sound, which grew fainter and fainter, till it was all covered in, I threw myself on the ground ; my heart was smitten, grieved, rent ; but I neither knew what had happened, nor what was to happen to me.—Death ! Grave !—I understand not the words.

Forgive ! forgive !—yesterday—Alas ! that moment should have been the last of  
my



my life. I am beloved ! am beloved by her ! the delightful sense of it for the first time penetrated, enflamed my heart. My lips still feel the sacred warmth they received from thine. New torrents of delight flow in upon my heart.—Forgive me ! forgive me !

Oh ! I knew that I was dear to you ; I saw it in the first animated look which you directed to me ; I knew it the first time you pressed my hand : but when I was absent from you, when I saw Albert by your side, my doubts and fears returned.

Do you recollect the flowers you sent me, when at a disagreeable and crowded assembly you could neither speak to me, nor hold out your hand ? Half the night I was on my knees before those flowers ; they were the pledges of affection : but these impressions grew fainter, and were at length effaced. — Every thing passes away ; but a whole eternity could not extinguish the flame which was yesterday kindled by your lips, the flame I feel within

within me.—She loves me ! these arms have encircled her waist, these lips have trembled upon hers ; she is mine—Yes, Charlotte ! you are mine for ever !

Albert is your husband ; but what of that ? it is for this life only.—And in this life only it is a crime to love you, to wish to tear you from him ! This is a crime, and I punish myself for it : I have enjoyed it—I have enjoyed the full delight of it.—I drew in a balm which has revived my soul. From this moment you are mine—yes, Charlotte, you are mine. I go before you, I go to my father, to thy father ; I shall carry my sorrows to the foot of his throne, and he will give me comfort till you arrive. Then will I fly to meet you, I will claim you, and remain with you for ever in the presence of the Almighty. I do not dream, I do not rave ; drawing near to the grave, my perceptions are more clear. We shall exist, we shall see one another again ; we shall see your respected mother ; I shall see her, I shall find

find her out, and I shall not be afraid to shew her my heart.—Your mother ! your image !

[ABOUT eleven o'clock, Werter asked his servant if Albert was returned : he answered, “ Yes ; for he had seen him go by on horseback.” Upon which Werter sent him with the following note unsealed :

“ Be so good to lend me your pistols for a journey. Adieu !”

The tender Charlotte had passed the night in great agitation and distress ; her blood boiled in her veins, and painful sensations rent her heart. The ardor of Werter's passionate embraces had, in spite of all her efforts, stolen into her bosom : at the same time she recalled to her memory the days of her tranquillity and innocence, and they appeared to her with new charms. She dreaded the looks of her husband, and the pointed irony of his questions,

questions, after he had heard of Werter's visit. She had never been guilty of any falsehood, never had dissembled, and for the first time she felt the necessity of it. Her distress and repugnance made her think her fault more enormous ; and yet she could neither hate the author of it, nor even resolve to see him no more. Melancholy and languid, she was scarcely dressed when her husband came in : his presence was for the first time irksome to her. She trembled lest he should perceive that she had been crying, and had had no sleep ; and this apprehension increased her embarrassment. She received him with a kind of eagerness, which rather betrayed remorse and confusion, than expressed any real satisfaction. Albert observed it ; and after opening some letters, he drily asked her, whether there was any news, and who she had seen in his absence ? She answered, after some hesitation, " Werter spent an hour here yesterday."—" He chuses his time well," said Albert ;

Albert ; and went into his room. Charlotte remained alone for a quarter of an hour. The presence of a man she esteemed and loved, gave a new turn to her thoughts : she recollected all his kindness, the generosity of his character, his attachment to her ; and she reproached herself for having so ill requited him. A secret impulse prompted her to follow him ; she went to his room, and took her work with her, as she sometimes used to do. She asked him, when she went in, if he wanted any thing ? he said " No," and began to write : she sat down and worked. Albert from time to time took a few turns up and down the room ; and then Charlotte addressed some discourse to him : but he scarcely made her any answer, and sat down again to his bureau. This behaviour was made more painful to her, by her endeavours to hide the concern she felt from it, and to restrain the tears which were every moment ready to flow. They had passed an hour in this irksome situation,



tion, when the arrival of Werter's servant compleated Charlotte's distress. As soon, as Albert had read the note, he turned coldly to his wife, and said, "Give him the pistols—I wish him a good journey." These words were a thunder-stroke to Charlotte; she got up, and tottering, walked slowly to the wall, with a trembling hand took down the pistols, and by degrees wiped off the dust. She would have made still more delay, had not a look from Albert obliged her to leave off. She then delivered the fatal arms to the servant, without being able to speak a single word; folded up her work, and went directly to her room, overcome with mortal grief, and her heart foreboding dreadful calamities. Sometimes she was upon the point of going to her husband, to throw herself at his feet, and to acquaint him with all that had happened the preceding evening; to tell him her fault, and her apprehensions:—but then she foresaw that it would be useless, and

P

that.

that Albert would certainly not be persuaded to go to Werter's house. Dinner was served; and a friend of Charlotte's, whom she desired to stay with her, helped to support the conversation. When Werter heard that Charlotte had given the pistols with her own hand to his servant, he received them with transport. He eat some bread, and drank a glass of wine, sent his servant to dinner, and then began to write.]

*To Charlotte, in continuation.*

—THEY have been in your hands; you wiped the dust from them: I give them a thousand kisses; you have touched them. Ah! Heaven approves and favours my design. It is you, Charlotte, who furnish me with the fatal instruments; I wished to receive my death from your hand, and from your hand I am going to receive it. I have been enquiring of my servant—you trembled when you gave him the pistols; but you did not bid me adieu.—Wretch-

ed ! wretched that I am !—not one adieu !  
—In that moment, which unites me to  
you for ever, can your heart be shut  
against me ? Oh Charlotte ! ages cannot  
wear out the impression ; yet I feel that  
you cannot hate the man who has this  
passionate love for you.

[AFTER dinner he had his trunk pack-  
ed up, destroyed a great many papers, and  
went out to discharge some trifling debts.  
He returned home ; and then went out  
again, notwithstanding the rain, first to  
the Count's garden, and then farther into  
the country. He returned when night  
came on, and began to write again.]

—MY dear friend, I have for the last  
time seen the mountains, the forests, and  
the sky. Adieu !—My dearest mother,  
forgive me : my friend, I entreat you to  
comfort her. God bless you !—I have  
settled all my affairs ; farewell ! We shall

see one another again, we shall see one another when we are more happy.

I have but ill requited you, Albert; and you forgive me.—I have disturbed the peace of your family; I have occasioned a want of confidence between you. Adieu! I am going to put an end to all this. May my death remove every obstacle to your happiness! Albert, Albert, make that angel happy; and may the benediction of Heaven be upon you!

[HE finished the settling of his papers; tore and burned a great many, others he sealed up and directed to his friend. They contained loose thoughts and maxims, some of which I have seen. At ten o'clock he ordered his fire to be made up, and a pint of wine to be brought to him, and then dismissed his servant; who, with the rest of the family, lay in another part of the house. The servant lay down in his cloaths, that he might be sooner ready the next morning, his master having  
ing

ing told him that the post-horses would be at the door before six o'clock.]

*Werter, in continuation, to Charlotte.*

PAST eleven o'clock. All is silent round me, and my soul is calm!—I render thanks to thee, O God! that thou grantest to me in these last moments warmth and vigour.

I draw near to the window, my dear friend, and through clouds which are driven rapidly along by impetuous winds, I see some stars. Heavenly bodies! you will not fall: the Eternal supports both you and me! I have also seen the greater bear—favourite of all the constellations; for when I left you in the evening it used to shine opposite your door. How often have I looked at it with rapture! how often raised my hands towards it, and made it a witness of my felicity! And still—Oh! Charlotte! what is there which does not bring your image before me? Do you



not surround me on all sides ; and have I not, like a child, collected together all the little things which you have made sacred by your touch ?

The profile, which was so dear to me, I return to you, Charlotte ; and I pray you to have a regard for it. Thousands of kisses have I imprinted on it, and a thousand times have I addressed myself to it as I went out and came in.

I have wrote a note to your father, to beg he will protect my remains. At the corner of the church-yard, which looks towards the fields, there are two lime-trees ; it is there I wish to rest : this is in your father's power, and he will do it for his friend. Join your entreaties to mine. Perhaps pious Christians will not chuse that their bodies should be interred near the corpse of an unhappy wretch like me. Ah ! let me then be laid in some remote valley ; or by the side of the highway, that the Priest and the Levite, when they pass my tomb, may lift their eyes to  
Heaven,

Heaven, and render thanks to the Lord, whilst the Samaritan gives a tear to my fate.

Charlotte ! I do not shudder now that I hold in my hand the fatal instrument of my death. You present it to me, and I do not draw back. All, all is now finished ;—this is the accomplishment of all my hopes ; thus all my vows are fulfilled !

Why had I not the satisfaction to die for you, Charlotte, to sacrifice myself for you ?—And could I restore peace and happiness to your bosom, with what resolution, with what pleasure should I meet my fate ! But to a chosen few only it is given to shed their blood for those who are dear to them, and augment their happiness by the sacrifice.

I wish, Charlotte, to be buried in the cloaths I now wear : you have touched them, and they are sacred. I have asked this favour too of your father.—My soul hovers over my grave.—My pockets are

not to be searched.—The knot of pink ribband, which you wore on your bosom the first time I saw you, surrounded by your children—(Dear children! I think I see them playing round you; give them a thousand kisses, and tell them the fate of their unfortunate friend. Ah! at that first moment, how strongly was I attracted to you! how unable ever since to loose myself from you!)—This knot of ribband is to be buried with me; you gave it me on my birth-day.—Be at peace; let me entreat you, be at peace!—

They are loaded—the clock strikes twelve—I go—Charlotte! Charlotte! Farewell! Farewell!

[ONE of the neighbours saw the flash, and heard the report of the pistol; but every thing remaining quiet, he thought no more of it.

At six in the morning, his servant went into the room with a candle. He found his master stretched on the floor and wel-  
tering

tering in his blood: he took him up in his arms, and spoke to him, but received no answer. Some small symptoms of life still appearing, the servant ran to fetch a surgeon, and then went to Albert's. Charlotte heard the gate-bell ring; an universal tremor seized her: she waked her husband, and both got up. The servant, all in tears, told them the dreadful event.—Charlotte fell senseless at Albert's feet.

When the surgeon came to the unfortunate Werter, he was still lying on the floor, and his pulse beat: but the ball going in above his eye, had pierced through the skull. However, a vein was opened in his arm; the blood came, and he still continued to breathe.

It was supposed, by the blood round his chair, that he committed this rash action, as he was sitting at his bureau; that he afterwards fell on the floor—He was found lying on his back, near the window. He was dressed in a blue frock and buff waistcoat, and had boots on.

Every

Every body in the house and in the neighbourhood, and in short people from all parts of the town, ran to see him. Albert came in : Werter was laid on his bed, his head was bound up, and the paleness of death was on his face. There were still some signs of life ; but every moment they expected him to expire. He had drank only one glass of wine. Emilia Galotti was lying open upon his bureau.

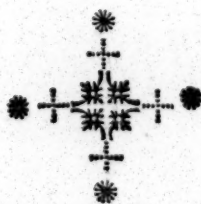
I will say nothing of Albert's great distress, nor of the situation of Charlotte.—

The old Steward, as soon as he heard of this event, hurried to the house : he embraced his dying friend and wept bitterly. His eldest boys soon followed him on foot ; they threw themselves on their knees, by the side of Werter's bed, in the utmost despair, and kissed his hands and face. The eldest, who was his favourite, held him in his arms till he expired ; and even then he was taken away by force.

At



At twelve Werter breathed his last. The Steward, by his presence and his precautions, prevented any disturbance amongst the populace; and in the night the body of Werter was buried in the place he had himself chosen. The Steward and his sons followed him to the grave. Albert was not able to do it. Charlotte's life was despaired of. The body was carried by labourers, and no priest attended.]



## WERTER to CHARLOTTE,

(A little before his Death.)

O Charlotte ! Charlotte ! all-accomplish'd maid,  
 To whom my heart its homage long has paid ;  
 In whom is center'd all that's good or fair ;  
 Whose smiles attractive, whose enchanting air,  
 To every heart their influence extend,  
 And make a *lover*, where you meant a friend :  
 Whose ruby lips and melting voice dispense  
 Mellifluous sounds, with more than manly sense ;  
 Whose waving locks and ivory neck impart  
 The fairest model for the sculptor's art :  
 O lovely Charlotte ! how shall I controul  
 The thrilling raptures that possess my soul ?  
 How bid my passion yield to Reason's voice,  
 When Reason's self must justify my choice ?

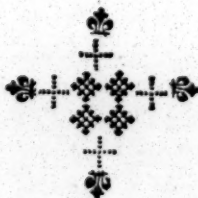
Yet, tho' thy charms, the source of every joy,  
 My thoughts by day, my dreams by night employ ;  
 Tho' thy lov'd image, by gay fancy dress'd,  
 With more than youthful ardor fires my breast ;  
 Woe to the man that would thy heart beguile,  
 And that angelic soul with guilt defile !  
 Who'd dare to violate the nuptial rights,  
 (That sacred bond which one to one unites.)  
 I *love*, but *covet* not, good Albert's wife,  
 Nor would destroy, my friend, thy peace for life.

But when at length those blissful realms we gain,  
 Where no connubial claims our thoughts restrain ;

Where



Where selfish, human laws shall cease to bind,  
 And universal love reigns unconfin'd ;  
 Then, free as air, congenial souls shall meet,  
 And sex, with holy rapture, sex shall greet :  
 Then will I snatch dear Charlotte to my arms,  
 And chafly revel in celestial charms :  
 Ecstatic bliss shall grosser love succeed,  
 And Charlotte make that scene—a heav'n indeed.



## ON S U I C I D E.

RASH youth, forbear ! O lay that poniard by,  
 Nor boldly thus the wrath of Heaven defy !  
 Contend not with thy God, in impious strife,  
 But calmly bear th' allotted ills of life ;  
 Nor from thy station treach'rously withdraw,  
 Assign'd by Heaven's inviolable *law*.

“ With grief, with pain, or poverty oppress,  
 “ No ray of hope to cheer the tortur'd breast ;  
 “ Or with ill-fortune, say, the wretch has strove,  
 “ Neglect of friends, or pangs of slighted love ;  
 “ What *law* commands *such* wretches to endure  
 “ Those desperate evils, which admit no cure ?”

—The first primæval law, by Heav'n impress'd,  
 At man's creation, on the human breast,  
 The love of life—which nothing can controul,  
 Till loss of reason stupifies the soul.

*Self-preservation* is God's firm decree ;  
 Can *self-destruction* then from guilt be free ?  
 The fear of death the stoutest heart appals,  
 Then listen to her voice—'tis Nature calls.

Hast thou no offspring, no dear, faithful wife,  
 By love, by interest, anxious for thy life ?  
 No aged father, or more tender mother ?  
 No friend more dear than sister or than brother ?  
 If thou thyself canst mock the poniard's smart,  
 Ah ! plunge not thus the dagger in *their* heart !

But say then, whence these miseries arise ?  
 Though men are foolish, God is good and wise ;  
 By whose kind plan, 'tis evident, mankind  
 Were for a life of happiness design'd.

Thy

Thy griefs then spring from luxury and vice;  
 Thy poverty, perhaps, from cards and dice.  
 Does love, like Werter's, thy fond breast inspire?  
 Let reason quench, at once, th' adult'rous fire:  
 Nor think t' intrude amidst the blest above,  
 A soul defil'd with sin and guilty love.

As death to *murder* is by Heaven decreed,  
*Self-murder* surely is a fouler deed,  
 And death eternal must that crime succeed;  
 For Mercy's self, though eager to relent,  
 Expects, at least, our crimes we should repent;  
 But what atonement can the wretch devise,  
 Who wilfully affronts his God—and dies?

}

Then yield not, coward like, to transient woe,  
 But bravely, like a Christian, face thy foe;  
 Dare to be wretched, if thou dar'st to sin,  
 Lest, when these pains thou'lt ended, *worse* begin.

F I N I S.







